

POEMS
—
LESLIE ROBERTS



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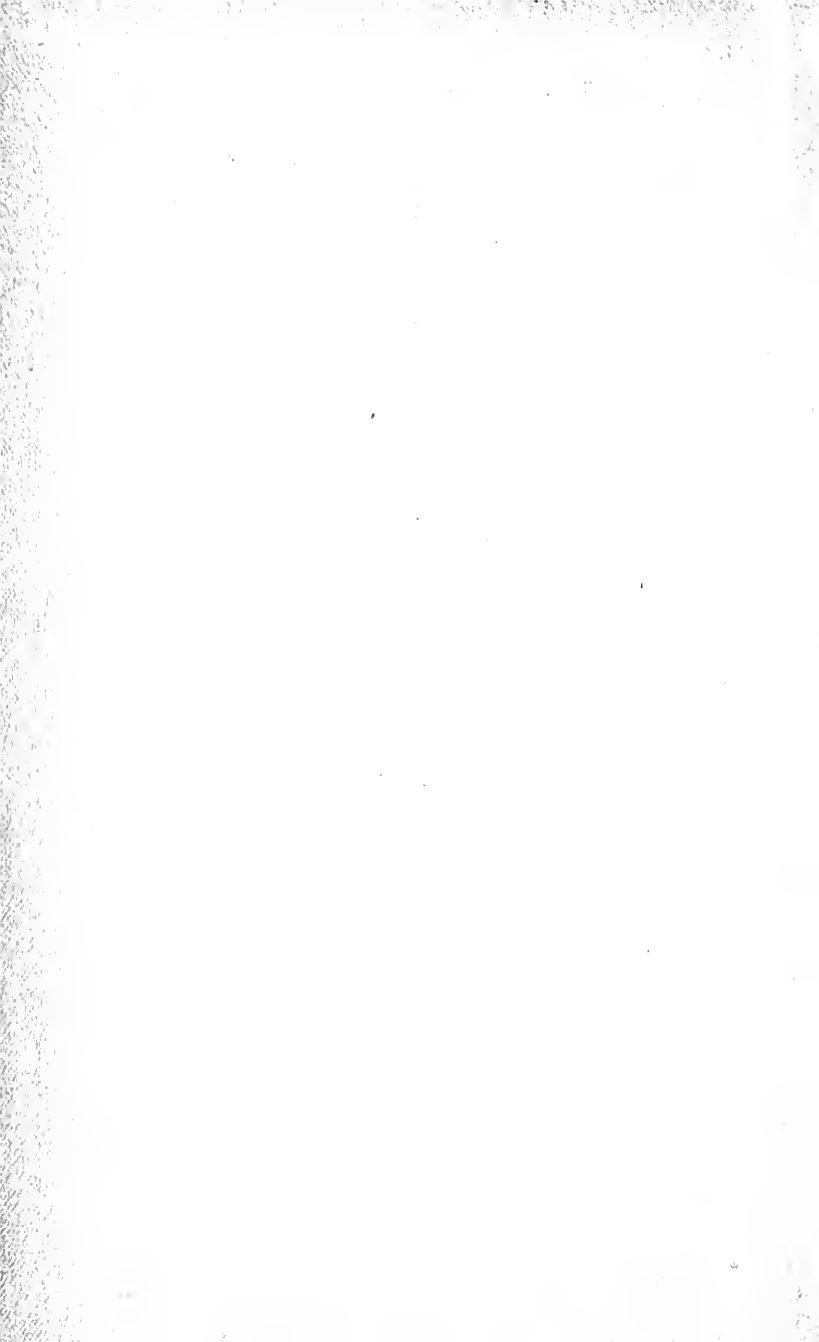


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POEMS



P O E M S

BY
CECIL ROBERTS

WITH A PREFACE BY
JOHN MASEFIELD



NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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PREFACE

Mr. Cecil Roberts has published several volumes of poems, each better than the last; *The Youth of Beauty*, *Twenty-six Poems*, and *Charing Cross*. Many of the poems in these volumes must already be known in America, where poetry is more eagerly read, perhaps, than in any other country in the world. I have been asked to write a few words in preface to the present volume, of his latest poems.

If I may say so, without offence, Mr. Roberts is a little like the Mysterious Stranger in a novel. One says of him (as the Count in the novel says), "He knows more of the French King than any man I ever met; yet who is he?" In conversation with him, I understood him to say that he is fifty-four years old. In conversation with a friend of his, I was told that he is twenty-five years old. For my own part, I should have said that he is somewhere between those two ages; yet it is difficult to be sure. When I think of the Mr. Roberts of real life, a very well-informed,

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PREFACE

liberally-minded, experienced journalist and war correspondent, who has seen much and many of the naval, military, and political doings and persons of the last five years, I say, with Mr. Justice Shallow, "He is old, he cannot choose but be old." When I think of the poems, I feel that he must be young; not young enough perhaps to have been carried away, or destroyed, by the recent great events, but young enough to see them clearly, to respond to them, and to realize that the tragedy of them has been the tragedy of the young, the blasting of the young, for the benefit and at the bidding of the old. That, in the main, has been the tragedy of the last two years. That, in the main, is the tragedy of Mr. Roberts' latest and best poems, in the volume here printed. For the first two years of the war the youth of the world died for their ideals. Mr. Roberts' best poems are inspired by the fear that since then the ideals may be dead with the youths, and that, if they are:

"There is a question to be asked,
There is an answer to be given."

Of all the strange and terrible months which men have lived through, the last months of this

PREFACE

war must have been the strangest and most terrible. Mr. Roberts does not describe them, no one could do that, but, like the watchers of the fight at Syracuse, he makes exclamations, from which one may judge of the conflict. There is no better indication of London during the war than his poem *Charing Cross*, after that old railway station, from which so many of the splendid started, and to which so many of the maimed returned. People who read the poem, years hence, will realize from it, how the war seemed to us, when a thousand, or two thousand, or twenty thousand wounded men passed into London in a night, as Mr. Roberts describes, in a "slow processional of pain," as "human refuse left by extravagant war."

In other poems, Mr. Roberts shows us unforgettably some moments of that now dead world of the last year of the war. He has poems on his friends: "Death has claimed their swift young lives," and another, bitter and intense, on the same theme,

"What will they care ten years hence for your
name,

Who cares a damn who died at Salamis?"

PREFACE

and another, equally forceful, on some politicians.

But the war ended before the absinthe of the politician could complete the ruin which the brandy of the soldier began. Mr. Roberts is now ready with a matured art to write of the better world which the heart of man will surely try to make out of the wreck of the old. He is young enough to be stirred by the making of that world. He has a quick eye for characters, a lively sense of rhythm, and a fondness for people, which should make his future work as remarkable as his present promise.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

BOAR'S HILL,
OXFORD.

CONTENTS

POEMS	PAGE
SPRINGTIME IN COOKHAM DEAN	I
WINTER AND SPRING	5
LOVE THAT WAITED	7
REMEMBRANCE	9
THE ENCHANTED WOOD	12
PHYLLISTRATON	14
MOONLIGHT SONATA	38
TO A LADY	40
JOY	41
MEMORIES	42
STRAYED HYLAS	45
ON THE SEVERN	56
TO A LADY WHO PAINTED MY PORTRAIT	58
CLIFTON CHURCH	60
AFTER VACATION	67
HABBERLEY VALLEY	69
SHE MOVES, THE LADY OF MY LOVE	75
APPASSIONATA	78
LOVE'S SILENCE	82
LA GLORIOSA DONNA	84
ANDROMACHE	87
TRIBUTE	95
IN THE WOOD	98
A CHILD'S EYES	100

THE DARK YEARS

CHARING CROSS	III
ECLIPSE	114
FUTILITY	115
THE DAYS OF OLD	117
THE RETURN	119
INHERITANCE	120

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE DELIVERER	121
ON SOME POLITICIANS OF THE PERIOD	122
LIBERTY IMPERILLED	123
DAWN	124
I WILL ARISE	125
LUSITANIA	130
WATCHMEN OF THE NIGHT	132
THE DOVER PATROL	135
LINES ON A PORTRAIT OF A MIDSHIPMAN KILLED IN ACTION .	137
VIGIL	139
A NAVAL NURSERY RHYME	141
THE AIRMEN	142
PRAYER FOR THE PILOT	143
THE NEUTRAL ZONE	144
LIFE	145
THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916, WHILE EUROPE WAS AT WAR .	146
MILLENNIUM	153

OTHER POEMS

HELEN OF TROY	157
THE MOON A LOVELY MAIDEN IS	161
TO MARJORY: IN SPRINGTIME	163
THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY	167
A DEAD POET	174
ON VIVISECTION	177
ABSENCE	178
THE COURTESAN	183
BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE	185
THE GREAT SHIPS	190
THE HOUSE ON A HILL	192
THE VALLEY	194
EXILE	196
HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED	199
A GARDEN AT RYDAL	205
A BOY'S LAUGHTER	209
TO PETER	216
TO RICHARD LE GALLIENNE	218
TO A CLIMBER	220
TO NOBLE WOMEN	222
TO A YOUNG POET	223
THE PORTRAIT	227

POEMS

SPRINGTIME IN COOKHAM DEAN

HOW marvellous and fair a thing
It is to see an English spring,
He cannot know who has not seen
The cherry trees at Cookham Dean,
Who has not seen the blossom lie
Like snowdrifts 'gainst a cloudless sky
And found the beauty of the way
Through woodlands odorous with may;
It is a rare, a holy sight
To see the hills with blossom white,
To feel the air about one flowing
With the silent rapture growing
In the hidden heart of things
That yearn, that flower, put forth wings
And show their splendours one by one
Beneath the all-rejoicing sun.

Perhaps the joy of all the earth
Moved through us on that day of mirth
When in the morning air we trod
Hills sacred to the woodland god,

SPRINGTIME IN COOKHAM DEAN

And heard behind us as we ran
The laughter of a hidden Pan,
Who dropped his flute because he heard
The artless cadence of a bird;
And we, who love the southern sky,
One moment ceased to wonder why
A poet in his exile cried
To see an English spring, and sighed
Because a chaffinch from the bough
Sings and shakes the blossom now.
For who would sigh for southern skies
Who once had seen the paradise
Of this new Eden where the flowers
Drench the woods with odorous showers,
And give delight till the sense sickens
With the rapture that it quickens?
This heaven where petals fall as stars,
This paradise where beauty bars
Its petalled, white, inviolable portals
'Gainst the clamouring of mortals,
And from green altars in dim shrines
Calls to the driven soul that pines
For leafy solitude, and prayer
That whispers through the branches there.

SPRINGTIME IN COOKHAM DEAN

When Spring, in her ascension, fills
The chalice of the sacred hills
With blossoms like the driven snow,
And longing takes the heart, then go
On pilgrimage to Cookham Dean
And through dim aisles of shadowed green,
Diapered with the light that trembles
Round each tree till it resembles
A maiden letting fall her hair
In cataracts of gold — draw near
The secret that brings Englishmen,
Faithful through exile, home again,
And watch the wonder of the morn
And hear the lark with wings upborne
Into the cloudless empyrean
Pour his lucent, quenchless pean,
Or feel the quickened senses start
In rapture at the artless art
Of orchards all in blossom showing
Against the blue of heaven glowing
Through its depths of luminous light;
Then from the windy woodland height
Through dim ravines where tall trees wait
For day's decline to gild their state

SPRINGTIME IN COOKHAM DEAN

And thrill them with caressing fingers
Of the sun-god whose touch lingers
Upon their limbs — by paths that wind
Into the valley go,— and find
The village by the water's edge
And listen to the rustling sedge
That by the churchyard whispers; go —
And tread the woodland paths I know
For whosoever has not seen
The cherry trees at Cookham Dean,
Who has not roamed its hills and found
Delight in that enchanted ground,
He cannot know, he cannot tell
Where Spring performs her miracle.

WINTER AND SPRING

I COULD not know how dear you are
Till you were gone,
Or that the days would seem so far,
Or one by one
The hours would pass so slow until
You came again
To feed my hungry gaze, and still
The heart in pain.

I did not know that I could find
One soul so dear,
Or that my arms could e'er enfold
Such love and fear,
A love that gives itself entire,
Receiving more,
A fear that sets my heart afire
With Love's strange lore.

How could I know your eyes would find
The soul in me,
With misery,

WINTER AND SPRING

Too long embittered, lone and blind
I had not thought that lips could kiss
 All pain away,
And wretchedness be changed to bliss,
 And Night to Day.

O more than human love that speaks,
 Discarding words,
Yet holds such meaning as one seeks
 And finds in birds'
First songs of Spring while boughs are bare,
 I feel anew
My heart burst forth with blossoms rare,
 Because of you.

LOVE THAT WAITED

I LOVED you when, a boy,
I thought you half divine,
And dreamed of coming joy
When you were mine:
I loved you for the grace
Crowning you when you moved,—
Your laughter, lips and face,
All these I loved.

And when a youth, I longed
To know you were mine own,
To voice the love that thronged
My heart, now grown
With love matured thro' days
All filled with thoughts of you;
So love, I sought your face,
Nor dreamt, nor knew.

The throstle called his mate,
And in the vales of Spring

LOVE THAT WAITED

Life ran with joy elate
Thro' everything;
" Now will I go to her
With gentle words and sweet,
Love's joyous messenger,
My Queen to greet! "

But when I found my love,
Her lips were cold as snow,
She did not speak or move,
She could not know:
Silent she lay in rest,
The cross within her hands,
Two lilies on her breast;
None understands
Why, in the night, I rise
Seeking the silent place
Where in the dark she lies,
Hiding her face.

REMEMBRANCE

CALLING of birds in the leafy elms, twilight
 creeping o'er river and lea,
Fierce and full on the low horizon swims the sun
 in a crimson sea;
The soft wind whispers, the lilac blossom sways in
 a scented dream of blue,
And the woodland slumbers, the shadows gather,
 but I am restless and think of you.

Where are you now, does your heart remember?
 here, where you left me, I cannot forget —
Though Winter has vanished and Spring runs riot,
 that one wild hour is with me yet!
The leaves had fallen, the night was chilly, the
 wind shrieked past us in search of prey,
Driving the withered blossoms of Summer, mock-
 ing the garlands that decked her way;
But dearer than hours of golden leisure, softer
 than days of a flower-sweet June,
Sweeter than strains of a distant music, fairer far
 than a woodland moon

REMEMBRANCE

Ghostly and pale 'mid the gaunt, black branches,
that one wild hour I hold through Time,
When vows were uttered and silence followed,—
naught save the beat of your heart on mine,—
For years we may heed not, a moment immortal
may rule all our dreams and the days to be,
And the Past may die not but live forever, yet
Life hold naught save a memory.

Chiming of bells in the old church tower, crying of
fowl on the liliated lake,
The lawns are bright with the last low glimmer,
the loud rooks wheel on the homeward wake;
The old hall windows flash golden sunwards, the
smoke curls up in the windless air,
Terrace and arbour and walk are voiceless, do
they remember who wandered there?
The low sweet laughter, the rustle of garments,
the echoing footsteps on gravel and stone —
They know, they know, and for old sounds listen,
mutely sad as I pace alone;
Steps where you trod and paths where you wan-
dered, all are dear to me, speaking of you —

REMEMBRANCE

Even if one should cease to remember, these things
would forget not and still be true;

New voices will fall where your voice has fallen,
new feet will tread in the paths that were
ours,

Our ears will hear not the birds at even, our eyes
will see not the blossoms and flowers;

But one hour shall be sacred from Time the De-
spoiler, the sunset hour when shadows fall,—

Then shall old sorrows seem good to remember,
old footsteps echo, old voices call.

THE ENCHANTED WOOD

THERE is a wood, I know it well —
Where broods a hidden mystery,
I sometimes think the birds could tell
Its strange and awesome history.

The trees so thickly grow therein
That all in darkest silence broods,—
It seems a place of gloom wherein
Deep passions war with evil moods.

Oh, once I saw, when passing by,
Upon a moonlit night in June,
An Altar with a Cross on high
That gleamed beneath the waning Moon;

And in the spectral glow, the trees
Became as living things that sang
A thousand Benedicites,
Until the hills with echoes rang!

I stood amazed, in breathless awe,
The Altar glowed with sacred Light!

THE ENCHANTED WOOD

I cannot tell the things I saw
Within the wood that wondrous night;

For when it seemed my senses cleared,
The vision in the wood was gone,
I only know that something weird,
Beyond all power of speech, was done.

The universal voice of Earth
Rose in one agonising groan,
And all the trees of stoutest girth
Bowed down unto the Altar stone —

Then from the holy Mystery
The Moon withdrew behind a cloud,
And there was nothing more to see,—
A mist, o'er all, lay like a shroud.

PHYLLISTRATON

An Arcadian Idyll
(To William Kiddier)

*OLD deeds, old customs sound the sweeter still
Though newer, and oft greater, events will
O'ershadow them and by their newer ring
Make old tales die. We lose upon Time's wing
All interest with those past days now flown —
Hidden with age's dust and half unknown:
But oft the world when seeking new delight
Will on some remnant of the past alight,
Some legend or folk-lore in whispers told
Around the farmhouse fire in Winter's cold,
When leaping flames make shadows jump and
dance
And from each nook and corner goblins glance.
Many a time and oft the tale relates
How some great hero, girded by the Fates,
Has conquered city, town, or ventured far
In hidden realms and honour won in war.
Such are the fables; freely fancy weaves*

PHYLLISTRATON

*And age adds romance to the hoary leaves.
Why should we lose these dim and charming tales
Of peoples living in the misty vales
Where happy maidens sing the whole day long
And vie with nightingales in raptured song?*

The night still held the woods in heavy sleep,
And through the waving branches oft would peep
Some star that waited for the coming day
To show its rosy edge along the bay,
To tip the restless waves with silver light
And banish from the world the gloom of night.
The groves of Arcady had not yet heard
The matin song of joy from soaring bird,
And silence reigned, save where the streamlet fell
To lower earth and wound across the dell.
Then slowly through the trees there softly came
A rosy light and bathed the leaves in flame,
The rank mists fled before the warming light,
The birds awoke and took their early flight.
The streamlet in the dell now sang aloud,
The singing lark had mounted till a cloud
Hid him from human eye, but still his song
Fluttered to earth and echoed all along

PHYLLISTRATON

The wooded paths and more secluded groves
Where lived in shy retreat the cooing doves.
Then o'er the distant plain the sound of song
Was carried by the breeze, and all among
The fernbanks and the rose woods, trooping, came
Garlanded children, laughing in their game;
And o'er their lithe young limbs in clusters hung
Roses and violets, profusely strung
On winding vines. Their only garment fell
From shoulder to the knee, displaying well
The clear cut features and the rosy cheek,
And moulded limbs; in vain the eye might seek
For ages and no fairer vision find:
Not even fleeting bird or panting hind
A fairer picture makes than childish forms
Unmarred by evil things, or life's rough storms
That line the face and dim the lustrous eye
And make once happy folk entreat to die.
The cares of life had placed no mark on these
Blithe spirits, for they danced beneath the trees
With Youth's light joy, abandoning the thought
With what for them the morrow might be fraught.
Still trooping came the joyous, happy throng,
Hailing the morn with laughter and with song,

PHYLLISTRATON

Until the echoes rang throughout the dell
And rolled along to where the water fell
In sparkling cascades to a darkened pond
Whose chill green depths revealed the floating
frond.

The morning haze hung o'er its surface still,
And tragedy seemed in its waters chill:
Whither this water flowed no one had found:
Perhaps it ran to caverns underground,
Whose slimy roofs ne'er saw the sun's bright ray,
And surging 'neath the world, found light of day
Far, far from where it dipped to deepest gloom;
Thence to a sunlit shore where surges boom
Upon the parchèd sand, and palm trees toss
Their plummy tops when cool winds blow across
The lonely land. Sweetly the children sang
Their morning anthem and the echoes rang
Throughout the leafy woods. Far off was heard
Another music, solemn and more weird,
Not from the piping voice of Youth, but song
More richly blended, seeming full and strong
With life: and lo, where part the woods to show
A patch of sky, bright with the sun's warm glow,
There came in view dim figures: as they strode

PHYLLISTRATON

Oft would they turn to one who stately rode
Upon a throne high placèd in a car,
Pulled by a troop of maidens casting far
Roses and other blooms. The sombre woods
Grew bright with splendrous robes and wondrous
 goods
Sparkling with gems.

 The car and round about
Was thronged with folk who made a joyous
 shout —

“ Phyllistraton, the King of Calydon!
Hail noble King! Apollo's bravest son! ”
He, turning, smiled upon the cheering mass
And spake. “ Good people, let my carriage pass,
For see, yon shining temple to great Pan
Urges me onwards, for is there a man
Would tarry when the dream of his delight
In bridal garb awaits him? Wondrous bright
Are her blue eyes, so blue that not the sea,
Nor even the wide expanse over thee,
Can show a blue so lustrous and so pure!
For many maidens fair would I endure
Hardships and trials, but for her alone
Would I sell liberty. She would atone

PHYLLISTRATON

For basest servitude, and chains of gold
Should bind me fast!

The gods once made me bold,
And venturing in Arcady, I gazed
And stood transfixed by beauty — so amazed
That doubts o'ercame me, and I asked again
If 'twas Olympian or Arcadian plain,—
Not where the gods dwell, but where shepherds
free

Pipe to great Pan beneath the laurel tree.
'Twas then her young attendant I espied,
And running towards her in hot haste, I cried —
'What fair shade haunts thy dell, hath she a
name?

Such beauty surely won undying fame!'
And in low tones the maid replied, 'Sir, she
Is Chryseïa, the daughter of Acte,
Of charm so great that Artemis hath made
Her keeper of the dell and forest glade.'
'Twas thus I came to know this charming child,
For child she was, and is; — of manner mild
And meek: such is her gentle sympathy,
To her, the timid kid for company
Will come, and all the world to her is kind.

PHYLLISTRATON

Haste then, my willing escort, leave behind
All thought of sorrow, joy with me this day,
And speed two happy lovers on their way! ”

The temple to great Pan was wondrous bright
With fluted pillars, carved in marble white;
Its hundred steps were thronged, and where the
pool

In its great, massive basin caught the cool
Bright jet of water springing from a fount
That drew its silv'ry spray from distant mount,
The maids of Chryseïa sat nervously.
Oft one would rise and very tenderly
Impress a kiss upon her mistress' cheek,
And Chryseïa, bewildered, turned to seek
With eager eyes of love, the distant sward
Whence slowly came her future liege and lord
Amidst the sound of cymbals and of song.
At last the rose-filled car was brought along,
And scarce had halted when from out it ran
The lovesick boy. The temple to great Pan
Trembled beneath the mighty roar which swelled
Up to the heavens when the folk beheld
Their Chryseïa run to the outstretched arms

PHYLLISTRATON

Of him who offered her a lover's charms:
And as he drew her to his manly breast
Kiss after kiss upon her brow he pressed,
While she lay gathered in his arms half faint
With boundless joy, and love without restraint.

While thus they stood, mounting the steps there
came

A tall white-bearded figure, halting, lame,
But from all sides great reverence was shown
To this newcomer, for his name was known
Far off across the plains of Arcady,
From high Olympus to Leonidi.
So mighty were his works that when he spake
The wind was silenced.

From far off men take

Their harvest offerings to him and he,
The Priest of Pan, with all solemnity
Would offer to the god, with chant and song,
Their thanks for winters short and summers long.
This happy morn the Priest had other task —
To pour the wedding oil from out his flask
And ask a blessing of those august powers
That bless with bliss and give to wedded hours

PHYLLISTRATON

Another joy than love — the eyes of Youth,
That see not fading beauty; want of truth
In such perception then is virtuous.

Slowly the Priest advanced and spake,

“ To us,

O children of the Plains of Arcady,
O shepherds of the glade and grassy lea,
Is given cause for joy. This is the day
When we are merry as we sing our lay
To our god Pan. The woods this morn shall
ring,

For see what rosy garlands children bring
To deck the Altar — such a scene should see
Our Chryseïa, fair daughter of Acte,
Given to one, though young, yet old in song
And deeds that make men valiant, true and strong.
Phyllistraton, thou King of Calydon,
O stranger of strange race, yet there is none
More fit to take unto a loving breast
Our maiden pure. But heed! before are pressed
In wedded joy her shapely lips to thine,
Thou must fulfil the oracle divine
Which runneth in the legend of our land,

PHYLLISTRATON

And list ye well that ye may understand,—
‘ He who shall claim the daughter of Acte
Shall play upon the flute a melody
Upon the morning of the feast to Pan,
And such his playing that there be not man
Who can outvie him.’

So if there is one,
Let him proclaim it here. If there is none
To challenge him, then shall the victor claim
His prize — the maiden Chryseïa, and fame
Shall rest upon his brow. Ye people hear,
For I shall ask no more. Is he to wear
The victor’s laurel? Heed, it is your choice
To challenge or to crown him with your voice! ”

Quickly in answer rose a mighty shout
That swelled and spread o’er dale and round
about,
Proclaiming with a universal voice
Phyllistraton was the free people’s choice,
And as the master of the flute that morn
His was the prize. But scarce the cry was borne
Throughout the grove, scarce had the echoes died,
When, to their cry, a deep loud voice replied —

PHYLLISTRATON

"I claim the prize as master of the flute!"

The whole throng turned about, surprised and
mute

To see who spake so boldly. When they gazed
Upon the challenger they were amazed;

So poor, he has a skin about his loins!

The Priest himself with all the people joins

The laughter which uprises to the sky

At thought that such a man should dare to try

To gain the prize! Yet pleasing was his face,

And thus unclad, his figure had a grace

That kings might envy, and his wavy hair

In curls hung o'er his brow; his chest was bare,

His neck, browned with the sun, and by his side

A scrip hung down, from which, with conscious
pride,

He drew his flute. Then spake he to them all

In simple words, from 'neath the Altar's pall —

"O people of the Plains of Arcady,

Ye marvel that a shepherd like to me

Should be so bold and claim the beauteous prize!

Knew I not Love before, those bright blue eyes

Would teach me now, and such a form divine

Would make me yearn until I called her mine.

PHYLLISTRATON

'Tis not on kings alone that Love can throw
Its spell, but on us all, nor can love know,
If it is love of Love, and not of Gain,
The claim of rank or riches. No, in vain
They oft would buy — a jewel hath its price,
But Love hath none save willing sacrifice
Of all that we once loved to one we love:
That is the only test by which to prove
If love is love of that which Love shall bring
In rich possessions, such as hath a king,
Or if it is a love where poverty
Shall ever grip, but where can never be
Regret, such love enriches all with all
That life can ever give. Hence do I call
And take the challenge up. Now hark ye well,
For I will play, and after, ye shall tell
If there be one among you who can play
A sweeter lay than mine."

Thus did he say
Unto the people gathered. While they talked
Among themselves of his strange words, he
walked
To where the Priest sat. When he held his flute
Up to his lips, the whispers died, and mute

PHYLLISTRATON

All waited, breathless, for the first few notes.
Then on the air there waveringly floats
The sound of song, so low and yet so sweet,
More like unto the first light sounds which greet
The starry night when first the nightingale
Sends forth his plaintive carol o'er the vale,
And mounting, ever higher, richer, grows
Until the hearer dreams the song which throws
Its flood of melody is not of earth
But from some realm of joy and tuneful mirth.
Those first light notes turned back their thoughts
again

To that romantic age when strong rough men
First wandered in the groves of Arcady
Enchanted with a dreamy melody
That led them on until they found at last
Pastoral plains, where wild deer flitted past,
Alarmed at these intruders of their peace:
The strangers gazed, then music seemed to cease,
And darkness crept across the open lea;
The wind among the trees moaned as the sea
And fearfully around the whisper ran
“ We are enchanted —’tis the pipes of Pan
Hath led us to his groves in Arcady ”

PHYLLISTRATON

And settling there they lived quite happily —
Such was the legend which those notes recalled,
And many, fearing, listened, much appalled.
Those floating notes seemed not of mortal birth
But higher origin of nobler worth.
Still higher and yet higher, mounting still,
The soaring notes outpoured across the rill
And echoed back across the plain again.
The children harked, enraptured, and the men
In silence stood, half wond'ring, half afraid.
The King of Calydon still held the maid,
And loth to part, he shot defiant looks
At him who played. The kingly mind ill brooks
Obstruction to its plans, and had he dared
He would have fought — and yet — and yet he
feared
That simple shepherd — all his valour fled,
And though no coward, there within him said,
In warning tones, a voice, "*No mortal this
Sweet player of the flute, Olympus' bliss
Hath taught such song to flow!*" Those notes
still soared
Until it seemed as if the heavens poured
The golden song that flooded all the sky;

PHYLLISTRATON

A song, not from the earth, but from the high
Broad realms above. Could mortal breath in-
spire

A song that breathed of this divinest fire?
Those last pure sounds of earth could never be,
But a strayed chord from Heaven's symphony.

Scarce had the player ceased when quickly ran
A whisper all around, "'Tis Pan! 'Tis Pan!
The Pipes of Pan! Great Pan hath come
again!"

In haste the stranger quelled the cry, "I fain
Would be a God, yet wherefore call me Pan —
The wish is not the deed, would any man
A mortal be if wish could make him God?
Nor have I yet on high Olympus trod,
I am not Pan, but taught by Pan to play
The flute he gave me when, one summer's day,
I sat and slept beside the running stream,
Dreaming that Pan had come; yet 'twas a dream
Most real, and when I woke, within my hand
I found a flute, and now throughout the land
I wend my way and pipe to who will hear.
And now, once more, I claim the maiden dear

PHYLLISTRATON

From her young lover. Maiden! come! O
come

And let me lead you to my forest home,
Deep in the thickest woods where roses grow
Around the stunted boles, where streamlets show
Their silv'ry faces winding thro' the glade,
To sunlight leaping from the forest's shade,
With spray, like flashing jewels, falling where
The rushing stream whirls o'er the roaring weir;
The morn awakes to song of soaring lark,
And rays of sunshine in the forest dark
Disperse the morning mists. The slumberous day
Is fragrant with the scent of new mown hay,
And evening's calm cool hours sweeter seem
Than all the fevered day. A golden gleam,
Reflected from the glory of the sky,
Where glowing colours blaze and quickly die,
Touches the leaves with fire. A breeze is sent
And whispers through the woods a sad lament
Like a sweet vesper hymn melodious,
Which lulls the woods to deeper sleep. To us
All things that can delight shall make our
days
One happy dream amidst life's sunlit ways.

PHYLLISTRATON

O Priest of Pan! Ye people of the plains!
Award to me this maiden for my pains."

As thus he spake, Phyllistraton then took
The maiden by the hands. "I will not brook
The one who loves me, and is loved by me,
To share the humble lot of such as he!
Love hath a greater tie than that of song;
If Pan himself should pipe the whole day long
My Chryseïa would still be mine, for Love
Ignores the powers of Earth or Heaven above!
No! Chryseïa, dear Chryseïa shall reign
As Queen of Calydon o'er my domain,
A queen of Beauty should be queen of Earth,
A simple shepherd knows not beauty's worth.
No idle legend breaks our plighted troth
E'en if it doth invoke Olympus' wrath!"

And as he boldly spake these words he turned
To all the people gathered.

"I have earned
True love with love, and not with magic song.
Then answer all ye people — Shall the wrong,

PHYLLISTRATON

False legend take away my joy in life
And rob me of a queen and of a wife? ”

The question rang throughout the woods and died,
But neither murmur nor a sound replied.
A sullen silence held them as a spell;
Love or a legend, which? — but none could tell.
Then as they stood, arose a mighty roar,
A rushing wind swept all the leaves before,
The heavens rent, and vivid flashes lit
The darkened scene. The temple dome was hit
And bathed in vivid flames by lightning flash.
The very earth shook 'neath the thund'rous crash,
Yet o'er it all was heard the wind's wild cry,
As though a host of demons thro' the sky
Were flying, wailing, from their dreadful doom!
But louder still than all the thund'rous boom
Of crashing trees, as tho' in terror's throes,
An awful shriek from him who piped arose —
“ I hear! I hear! ” he cried, with arms outflung,
Beneath a stricken tree whose branches hung
In woeful state; and as he spake there ceased
The moaning cry, as though a spirit wrest
Itself away from earth, and there he stood

PHYLLISTRATON

In terror near the border of the wood.

“Ye people of the Plains of Arcady!

That was the Naiad's cry! Ah woe is me!

That moaning voice proclaims my end is nigh!

Alas! for me to love is but to die!

Maid of my heart, sweet child who taught me
love,

Faint not nor fear, thy lover need not prove

His angry words. The dawn is soon the night

Of my young love; the blossom, soon a blight

Hath dashed its pride, yet, though it meaneth
death,

I find a joy in each fast fleeting breath

That hurries me from life. Sweet maid, but hear

My fate forlorn, and should a tender tear

In pity fall for me, then do I go

Unto my fate, happy in that I know

One heart that mourns for me, and such a heart,

That for it our short breath would often part

And leave its narrow prison for the great

Broad unknown realms above. Hark, I relate

The story of my hapless wanderings: —

One dewy eve I sat expanding rings

Upon a pool, which grew until they died

PHYLLISTRATON

In calm and nothingness. When I espied
This strange unrestfulness, wherefore it showed,
Full eager was I then, for sunsets glowed
All mirrored in perfection other eves
Upon its glassy face. The trunks and leaves
That fringed the water's edge, reflected grew
Within its depths, fantastic and anew.
Charmed was I with this spot, and so I played
Upon my flute. Softly the evening's shade
Its filmy mantle threw across the glen,
But I played on in happiness — and then,
Ah, then! Could words relate the sight that rose
From out those dull green depths — the sweet
 repose,
The dazzling beauty of that perfect face,
The flowing hair, still wet and with a trace
Of that phosphorous fire which dwells below!
Thus rose the Naiad, solemn, stately, slow,
Venus herself could not more handsome be
When reigning o'er her court. Then unto me
The Naiad spake.

 ' O shepherd piper, thou
Hast made the queen of Naiads break a vow
That she would never rise up from beneath

PHYLLISTRATON

These waters which the water lilies sheath.
But such a song would make a vow a sin
If it were kept. Fair youth, I shelter in
These gloomy depths in refuge from the wrath
Of Venus who in jealous hatred hath
Pursued me in her fury. Here I dwell
Amidst the damp rank weeds. Could maiden tell
A sadder story? Pipe once more to me,
For it recalls the past — tho' memory
Doth pain: yet pipe, for ever pain's a joy
When I but see again that shepherd boy,
One such as thou, who played his happy song
And vowed his love to me the whole day long.'
'Twas thus she spake, her tones were sweet and
low

Like zephyr winds on summer days that flow
In melody afar. I loudly cried —
'One loves you yet!' but sadly she replied,
'No, never now, my fate is thus to be
And sadly pine away: 'tis not for me
To know the joy of Love!' Again I cried,
'O water nymph, happy that I espied
Your beauteous form, for know, one loves you yet,
These eyes, this heart of mine, can ne'er forget

PHYLLISTRATON

What they have seen and loved! ’

“ The Naiad turned

And spake to me, ‘ Oh, often have I yearned
To hear such words of love — and wilt thou vow
To love but me alone? ’ She spake so low
And dreamily, bewitched with beauty, I,
In fervent accents quickly made reply —
‘ O Naiad fair, may all the gods above
Avenge with death if ever I should love
And vow in words to others save to you! ’
And as I vowed, she sank beneath from view.
Thus did I swear my love, tho’ now I know
It was bewitching charm that made me vow,
And often have I wondered if I dreamed
All that I thought I saw. The waters gleamed
And rippled, but in vain I waited there,
For ne’er returned again that Naiad fair.
Since then for many seasons have I played
My flute throughout the land, and never stayed
In peace. Where’er I roamed, my vow of love
Made me afraid, lest that the gods above
Should vengeance take if ever I made speech
To maiden fair. In vain would I beseech
Those waters cold to show the form again

PHYLLISTRATON

Of her I loved. But true love makes us fain
Forget the ties of old for new desire.
Dear maiden, though 'tis death, I still aspire
To call thee mine. Alas, for me the breath
Which tells my love announces also death,
But love cares not for death, and though my heart
With sorrow breaks, still rather would I part
With life itself than not declare my love!
I have declared it, and the gods above
Now take their vengeance! Maiden dear, fare-
well,
I, dying, leave thee. Far off in a dell
My eyes will close in sleep for evermore,
And they shall ope upon a brighter shore
Where I await thy coming."

Thus he said,
And as he spake he looked as though one dead;
The rosy cheeks were blanched: a pallid hue
Spread o'er his face, and on his lithe form grew
The weight of years, enfeebling all his frame;
Then towards the temple steps, he, halting, came,
And taking both the maiden's hands in his,
He lowly bent and gave to each a kiss.
The people stood in silent awe to see

PHYLLISTRATON

This climax of a lover's tragedy;
Phyllistraton's blue eyes were dimmed with mist
When that enfeebled, dying player kissed
The hands he loved. "Farewell! I go to die,
To die for love! Farewell!"

That last low cry
Rang o'er the dell and thro' the quivering air,
Filled with a sad lament and deep despair.
Then through their midst he passed across the
glade
And disappeared within the forest's shade.
In silence stood they all, and not a sound
Was heard within the dell. A hush profound
Had fall'n upon the earth, till came a breeze
And made a tearful sigh among the trees,
But over all they heard the Naiad's cry
Float in the air, and then, echoing, die
With one deep sob among the distant hills,
Shaking the mountain tops and glistening rills.
And lastly, heard they from the forest deep
The roaring of a wind, which seemed to weep,
And wither by its touch the falling leaves,
In fancy, moaning loud — "Thus, Nature
grieves!"

MOONLIGHT SONATA

WHEN I walked out from Grasmere Vale,
One hour after eventide,
The Moon had risen weirdly pale,
And the wind blew far and wide
The withered leaves, all brown and sere,
That told me of the mellowing year.

Then, suddenly, I saw a sight
That made me pause upon my way —
A flickering maze of dancing light
That shone like silver spray!
I stood entranced, forgetting all,
And powerless in the vision's thrall.

It was a simple thing, I know,
A few dead leaves stirred by the breeze
That danced and made a spectral glow
Beneath the barren trees;
It seemed as though they yet had life
To mock the wind in joyous strife!

MOONLIGHT SONATA

Beneath the Moon they shone so bright,
And flickered with such ghostliness;
Embodied spirits of the night,
 Beneath the Moon's caress
They tossed and twirled, and round and round
They blithely capered o'er the ground!

When, suddenly, they all did cease
Their dancing in the moonlit way;
The breeze died down, and all was peace,
 And so I did not stay —
The wind, it was their very breath,
And gone, they all lay still in death!

TO A LADY

LADY, how can the least, imperfect art,
However used with skill, suffice to prove
Or give expression to the tender love
Grown 'neath the radiance thy dear smiles impart?
I am held captive by thy gentle heart
And daily made thy debtor, and above
All beauteous things, imperial, thou dost move
In queenly office held by queenly art;

Therefore I am most happy when thy thought
Towards me is turned, and like an Eastern slave
Whose silent homage won a Queen for friend,
I live and serve within thy gracious Court,
Finding the slightest sign of love I gave
Repaid with graces which no Arts transcend.

JOY

WHO named thee Joy — what Delphic
whisper told

Thy mission to the hearts of men, what muse
Divined the treasure of thy heart's pure gold?
Wert thou so named that poets might enthuse
And in the whispering might find sweet excuse
For drinking nectar which thy lips enfold?
For those who know thee, Joy, forget the cold
Relentless world, paying young Love his dues.

Joy in the days of Spring came down to me,
Love in her heart, and laughter in her eyes,
And in her speech a dulcet melody
Wherein two hearts commingled, with soft sighs
Trembling between the pauses, when the lips,
Voiceless with passion, sought the soul's eclipse.

MEMORIES

(To Mrs. Naylor)

DO you remember
Claude, Lancelot and I
Lying in wonder,
Beneath a May sky,
Listening in silence 'mid green Malvern hills
To the song of the lark and its wonderful trills?

Do you remember —
You cannot forget!
Listening in wonder
I see your face yet;
List'ning, I whispered, " Ah, if we could sing
As yon lark in the sky! How his melodies ring! "

" Chorister, singing
High up in blue heaven,
Oh that a part of
Thy rapture were given,

MEMORIES

Poet that soarest, to one who would soar,
One who lives for his song, for his song and no
more! ”

Do you remember
Those words which I spake,
Lying with you
And with yours in the brake?
Clouds floated over us, what did we care
For the lark was our minstrel, our wine was the
air!

Ceaselessly toiling
With quivering wings,
Higher he reaches
And blither he sings,
With a pæan of song from a heart overjoyed
He is gone from our sight, 'tis a voice from the
void!

Do you remember
Down, down from the blue
Dropping, he came then,
'Tis certain you do!

MEMORIES

“ Look how he dives ! ” I remember you said,
Then he dived, and the hills were as dumb as the
dead.

Do you remember —
Oh ! can you forget —
Moments so golden
Come back to me yet,
Lancelot and Dorothy, Claude, you and I —
All listening to one little bird in the sky !

STRAYED HYLAS

*σὺν καὶ οἱ Ἕλῃας κίεν, ἑσθλὸς ὁπάων,
πρωθήβης, ἰὼν τε φορεὺς φυλακὸς τε βιοῖο.
ΑΡΓΟΝΑΤΤΙΚΩΝ.*

HYLAS, the beautiful Hylas, ere Manhood
had broadened his frame,
Was comely in sight of all maidens, and Heracles,
passing one day,
Seeing him playing all naked, called out to him:
“Tell me thy name!”
And the youth answered thus: “I am Hylas,
what wouldst thou, O Stranger, O say!”
And Heracles, worshipping Beauty, was charmed
with the handsome young Greek,
For dark were his eyes, and his body glistened
brightly with wrestler’s oil,
And his was the grace of Apollo. “O lustrous-
limbed athlete, I seek
A pupil to learn of my cunning, which knowledge
shall bring him much spoil.
Tomorrow, when breaks o’er the ocean the light
of the Dawn, I depart

STRAYED HYLAS

With Jason, whose vessel awaits me, to join in the
Quest of the Fleece;
Come, follow! thy limbs they are lithesome, the
voyage will need a brave heart,
But Heracles, he will o'erguard thee, no stronger
than he in all Greece."

Then quick the reply of young Hylas: "O
master, I follow thee now!
My limbs they are stout, for this noonday I
wrestled with Crassus the Strong,
And conquered the Pride of Iolchus; this laurel
they placed on my brow,
Not unworthy a pupil thou'lt find me. Accept
me, O master, I long
For venture where danger o'erthreatens, for sight
of the Land of the West,
And the breath of the soft-heaving ocean! Blow,
winds! for we sail in the Morn!
Swift Argo goes out from the harbour, goes forth
to the Isles of the Blessed,
And Jason, with Heracles, leads us! Aurora!
Come, Goddess of Dawn!"

STRAYED HYLAS

So Hylas sailed forth from Iolchus, and Heracles
loved the young boy,
He trained him to feats of endurance, he gave him
the wealth of his lore,
And daily young Hylas grew stronger, his beauty
to all was a joy,
And, were he a God from Olympus, they could not
have worshipped him more.
His laughter was light as the sunshine, his teeth
were as pearls set between
Lips like the bow of young Eros, and brighter
than stars were his eyes,
His body was sweet as stored apples, and as silk
was its naked sheen,
So young Hylas 'mid men was held peerless, by
maidens a coveted prize.

Day after day sailed the galley, the rhythmical
beat of the oars
Kept time with the song of the minstrels who sang
of the glories of war;
It fired the sailors to action, till, riding 'twixt
Hellespont's shores,

STRAYED HYLAS

They anchored in lee of a mountain that looked
on the bay from afar.

Like porphyry gleaming in sunset, the cliffs
towered up to the sky,

And round them were odorous valleys. "Here
rest we awhile!" cried they all,

And, forth from the galley outleaping, they ran to
the fields that were nigh,

Where gladly they rested or feasted, or bathed in
the waterfall.

O beauteous valley, all golden! for here 'mid the
violets grew

Pale lilies and hyacinths stately, that dreamed in
the water below,

And sweet was the slumberous noonday, and soft
were the zephyrs that threw

The scent of the violet meadows, at dusk when the
West was aglow.

So Hylas was happy and wandered, the fairest of
all that was fair,

He lay 'mid the blooms amaranthine and sang to
Apollo an hymn,

STRAYED HYLAS

Or bathed in bright rivers of crystal, or plaited the
vine in his hair,
And danced like the naked Silenus, enacting each
transient whim.
One day by a pool he lay dreaming, his couch was
a hyacinth bed,
His hand idly dipped in the waters when softly a
beautiful face,
Out of the depths slowly rising, perceiving the
boy's curly head,
Uttered a cry of amazement, and loved the young
Greek for his grace.
Then quickly she called through the waters, and
Malis and Eunica came
To Nychea, fair as a lily — together the nymphs
took his hand,
Then gently they lifted his body, all fearing to
shatter a frame
Moulded with beauty so wondrous, so strong, yet
so lithe and so grand.
Oh, how their bosoms beat quickly as to them they
pressed the fair boy,
And, dreaming, he clasped Malis to him, then,
waking, was startled to find

STRAYED HYLAS

The nymph in his arms gently nestling, her face
filled with radiant joy,

While Eunice pillowed him softly, her hair float-
ing o'er from behind.

Then Nychea whispered: "Dear Hylas, we love
thee, for ever dwell here,

Thy strength and thy beauty delight us, reign King
of the Nymphs of the Pool!"

But Hylas upstarting cried: "Never! Where
am I? come, tell me, O where?"

Then the nymph answered: "Why wouldst es-
cape us? — this grotto is splendrous and
cool!"

"Hearken then, Naiads, my reason is not that I
count Love so light,

For this is the realization of shadowy dreams I
have dreamed

Of bosoms on which I slept pillowed through all
the dark joy of the night.

No! I hold Love too precious to scorn it; were
thy promises all that they seemed,

Duty forbids me to linger, the galley that rides in
the bay

STRAYED HYLAS

Awaits my return; then release me, or Jason, our
leader, will frown,
For the sailors have long left the meadows, we
sail out at sunset today,
We sail to the West, out to Phasis, in the path
where the sun rolls down.
Beauty! ah, what is my beauty? — a thing that
must fade with the day,
These arms now so lusty and lithesome, my body
now throbbing with life,
These thighs with their shimmering muscles that
glide in their sheaths as they play,
Time-enfeebled, are scattered to ashes, the sport
of the winds in their strife.

“ Love is a libertine, Naiads, he maketh mine eyes
so to burn
Like stars in the vestment of darkness that, madly
enraptured, ye cry,
Nor hear how the snarer exultingly laughs at the
passions that yearn
All hot for the scent of my body; and thoughtless,
at bidding, ye fly,

STRAYED HYLAS

Clasping with passionate sobbings, outpouring
your love in mine ear,
Till he, who resisted, is helpless, succumbs to your
fiercest embrace!
O glorious strength that enfolds ye, how noble this
manhood to wear!
Strength is the pride of my being, Beauty the boast
of my face! —
But listen, O Naiads, O hearken, 'tis vainly ye
hold me, for I
Must turn me away to the seashore, the galley
awaits my return.
O Naiads enchanting, I love ye, but Beauty like
yours cannot die,
My lustrous-limbed body will perish, not then for
my love ye would yearn!
Hark! 'Tis a voice that calls 'Hylas!'
'Hylas!'— 'tis Heracles calls,
He who has nurtured and loved me, Heracles,
strongest of men!
Nychea! Eunica! Malis! — He wonders what
fate me befalls!
Release me, be merciful, Naiads! I fain would
go to him again!

STRAYED HYLAS

‘Hylas! Ho! Hylas! Where art thou?’

He calls me — nay, words shall not soothe
My body with dalliance fleshly, no bosom shall
pillow my head;

If your breasts were as fair as the lilies, if your
skin were as waxen and smooth,

If your lips were as rose leaves, no kisses, no
sighs, and no tears that ye shed,

Would make me succumb to your beauty; release
me! these waters are dank,

I pine for the rays of Apollo, I pant for the breath
of the day!

Release me, O Nymphs, I implore ye! for when
through these waters I sank,

Ye promised to lead me back thither, now must I
return on my way.”

But vainly he pleaded in accents, now angry, now
tearful, now soft,

The nymphs flung their white arms around him.

“O Hylas, we love thee, here dwell!

Remain with us here for we need thee, for thou
art the boon that we oft

STRAYED HYLAS

Petitioned Olympus to grant us; thy beauty hath
pleased them so well,
They sent thee, dear Hylas, then wherefore rebellion when Gods make decree?
Reject not, lest worse should befall thee, the love
that we offer thee now!
Thou art fair, thou art beautiful, Hylas,—‘ His
beauty immortal shall be! ’
For thus spake the Gods of Olympus, nor falsely
are known they to yow.”

So softly beguiled with their voices, he gave him
to lover’s delights,
And the nymphs of the grotto, as servants, attended his slightest behest,
But oft in the slumberous noondays, and oft in the
calm of the nights,
He bethought him of Heracles wandering, and
wept when he thought of the Quest.
And the Slayer of Lions, bemoaning, returned to
Propontis’ wild shore,
But never a sign of the galley, all barren the sea
met the sky,

STRAYED HYLAS

For Jason had wearied of waiting — “ Return
now each man to his oar ! ”

And ploughing the furrows of ocean, they sailed
where the sunsets die.

Then Heracles turned to the westward — “ The
boy whom I loved, he is dead ! ”

He cried in the depths of his sorrow, and ranging
o'er dale and o'er glen,

To Trachis, all footsore and weary, he journeyed
through valley and mead,

Nor Time sealed the fount of his sorrow, nor
Springtide rejoiced him again,

For Hylas he loved as a brother, and Hylas he
loved as a son,

And life that was golden grew cheerless, and
heavy the heart that was light.

“ The Gods gave him Beauty,” he muttered —
“ grew jealous of what they had done,

So they struck at their rival so handsome ; ah, who
against Gods can fight ? ”

ON THE SEVERN

WHEN the afternoon was golden
In a boat we gently crept
Up the river 'twixt the olden,
Silent hills that softly slept,
Till we came to dreaming Arley
Climbing high beyond the bend —
Dreaming, sun-red roofs from which slow wreaths
of smoke ascend.

When the fringe of hills lay burning
As the Sun sank in the West,
Down the misty stream returning,
Softly gliding, oars at rest,
We sang sweetly in the twilight
As the purple hills turned grey,
Floating, floating, floating down the silent home-
ward way.

O'er the sombre hills ascending
Rose the Moon whose flooding light

ON THE SEVERN

Changed the sullen river wending
To a silver path through night;
In our wake the rippling water
Like a bed of diamonds shone,
Gleaming, gleaming, gleaming as the boat went
gliding on.

Quaint, old Bewdley town lay dreaming
Where the silver Severn flows
With reflections brightly gleaming
'Neath the lamplit bridge that throws
Shafts of light upon the water
Swirling dark and silently,
Flowing, flowing, flowing past the arches to the
sea.

In the silence, long, long after,
When those moments are no more,
Still I hear the ghostly laughter
With the sound of dipping oar,
And my heart goes fondly dreaming,
Down to Bewdley Bridge it goes —
Gliding, gliding, gliding where the silver Severn
flows!

TO A LADY WHO PAINTED MY POR- TRAIT

(H. S.)

LADY, your eyes are quick to find
The subtle shades upon a face,
And with a touch, both true and kind,
Your brush has left full many a trace
Of the half-wonder and surprise
That filled me as I watched the hand,
So swift beneath your thoughtful eyes
That look, and seeing, understand.

For you have painted, not my face,
But something which, with feeling rare,
Your heart divined, and in the place
Of eyes that merely gaze and stare
You painted light diffused in gloom
Because you knew a poet sees
In Beauty, its foreshadowed doom,
In Life, its hidden mysteries.

A LADY WHO PAINTED MY PORTRAIT

Therefore, O lady, hand with eye
And feeling heart combine to give
That power of subtle alchemy
By which your subjects truly live;
And if a poet's soul has been
Wholly revealed to you, be kind!
Art, with its deeper sight, has seen
Something to which the world is blind.

CLIFTON CHURCH

PEACE! Such a peace serene o'erbroods this
place

That melancholy Death for once seems fair,
Even the winds have ceased their boisterous race,
Once more upgathered to their hidden lair;

Slowly the church clock chimes the hour of eight,
Its fingers now grown golden in the light
Of the swift-dropping sun, whose crimson state
Fades in the grey and purple of the night;

Shrilly afar, the peacock's strident call
Shatters the silence of this magic hour,
Proudly he sweeps the lawns of Clifton Hall,
Thinking his beauty greater than all power;

Yet, foolish bird, even as thou this one,
Forth in the glory of her bridal veil,
Passed up the path, fleet flew the years, and gone,
Hither they brought her, sightless, voiceless, pale.

CLIFTON CHURCH

Joy she had known and happy was her lot;
Lips of a sunbrowned youth in summer days,
When all the air was slumberous and hot,
Often had shaped them to her beauty's praise.

Here 'neath an elm, he lies who kissed those lips,
Stilled are the limbs that throbbed in ecstasy;
Swiftly yon pointing finger onward slips
Round the scored dial to Eternity.

Turn ye aside and read this stone — "Here lies,
Age twenty-two, the body ——" — read no
more!

In the few graven words my heart descries
How much deep sorrow and despair they store!

Knew ye not him? — He was a youth most fair,
Graceful as ever Grecian sculptor dreamed:
List to the roaring of the distant weir,
Often his body in its waters gleamed:

When o'er the earth the call of Spring was heard,
When all the valley and the grove were gay,
Filled with the blossom's scent and song of bird,
Throbbing with life, he went at break of day,

CLIFTON CHURCH

And like a god that glories in his might,
Cleaved he the waters with his strenuous arms,
Nor do I wonder that each maiden's sight
Fondly was turned to view his many charms.

He knew the happy hours of youthful days,
For often, knee-deep, 'mid the ferns he stood,
Telling his love to one whose winsome ways
Filled with strange passion youth's hot-singing
 blood.

Thus thro' the years he grew to man's estate,
A glorious creature full of strength and health,
Little he knew how interweaving Fate
Sought subtle Death to steal away Life's wealth.

One morn, one happy, sunlit summer-morn
When all the earth her fairest vesture donned,
They found his ivory body, bruised and torn,
Down by the lashing weir, whose waters fond

So oft his muscled arms had thrashed to foam,
And by the floating weeds upborne he lay;
Oh tender were the hands that bore him home!
Oh many were the tears they shed that day!

CLIFTON CHURCH

See, where the church's trellised portal stands,
Down by the shadow of the buttressed walls,
Gleams a white angel with upraised hands? —
A tender story that quiet spot recalls:

A little bud, the coronal of Spring,
From off the parent-tree of Motherhood,
The tend'rest, sweetest, smiling little thing
That ever sprang from human flesh and blood!

Not long it blossomed in the cottage home,
For ere the rose its fragrant petals shed,
Long ere the swallows sought their southern home,
The little bud of Life lay still and dead.

Long thro' the summer night they watched beside
The little cot, and when the birds at dawn
Twittered their welcome to the day, it died,
Life that had passed to Death ere scarcely born.

Back to the Heavenly Gardener, here they bore
The end of all their hopes and all their joy,
Thus do we unto earth again restore
The little thing she gives in Life's employ;

CLIFTON CHURCH

Nor do I think in vain the sighs and tears,
Life is not measured by its joys alone,
Else were it vain to live and count the years,
Else were Life's music one long monotone.

Sorrow and Joy, by these two things we reap
All the heart's harvest of its passionate sense,
Death cannot be a blind, insensate sleep,
'Tis but a change, a growth, a passing hence —

Hence through the portals of that guarded Door,
On through the sweeping curtains of the Night,
Unto those silenced voices we implore
Once but to speak and whisper all is right.

Here, at this hour of changing Night and Day,
Softly they sleep — why mourn the happy dead?
Death never was creation's end, and say —
Is the dead rose's fragrance vainly shed?

When the sad strain of a sweet violin
Ceases to flow from out the four-stringed heart,
When a soft voice to eyes long dry doth win
Tears, trembling tears that from emotion start,

CLIFTON CHURCH

When dimpled hands and rosebud lips are cold,
When o'er her breast, from whence we drew our
 life,

A mother's hands, no longer warm, we fold,
Is it for naught our years with pain are rife?

Tell me not so, else would this churchyard seem
Merely a place for storing useless lives;
See where the roses speak the mourner's dream,
Some memory dear that tender token gives.

Peace! Such a peace serene o'erbroods this place
That melancholy Death for once seems fair,
Lo! o'er the churchclock's numbers slowly pace
Time's pointed fingers. Hark! the listening air

Vibrates with sound of nine slow, measured beats;
Over the graves fast gathering gloom descends,
And all the light, drawn westward, now retreats;
High thro' grey Heaven the climbing Moon up-
 wends.

Light from the Darkness! Vast star-dusted
 fields,
Hidden by Day's illumined vault, appear —

CLIFTON CHURCH

Maybe the darkness we call Death reveals
Soul-lighted realms unknown, unthought of here!

Wherefore I count the dead most happy, since
Wide is the knowledge they, by Death, attain;
Why at the thought of greater wisdom wince,
If little loss includes the greater gain?

Rest, outworn dust! Yet, in thy resting, serve!
Even this rose derives from thee its bloom.
Lives are not vain that such an end reserve;
This much I learn amid the gathering gloom!

AFTER VACATION

(To "Sonnie"—D. O.)

LET me think it over, now you are gone —
I cherished those hours, every one,
When your boyish laughter filled the air
And broke my thought of pain and care.

We walked together by woodland ways,
I, and you with the bright, young face,
With a faith undimmed in a world of joy,
And the open heart and mind of a boy;
I loved your face, so frank, so fair,
Finding my own lost boyhood there,
And your chatter was more than speech of men,
Fresh from a world I knew again,
A world where dreams work out to truth,
And the golden age is the age of youth.

The age of youth! — I scarce have known
The sweets of it — too soon upgrown
In a world of men where life is fierce

AFTER VACATION

And the kindly heart is the heart to pierce.
O happy boy! was it with surprise
You saw the tears come into my eyes? —

For your words were light as your heart, and so
You questioned me, and wished to know
What made me sad — and I could not say,
Though my heart knew well in a furtive way
And my arm drew tighter around your own,
For something told me I stood alone,
That between your years and mine there swept
The flood of memory wherein slept
The boy's fond dreams — such dreams as you
Are dreaming yet, and finding true!

O red, young lips and rosy cheeks!
My heart for its long-lost boyhood seeks,
Some echo of it rang in your voice,
And hearing I could not help rejoice,
And part of my love was love for you,
And part for the dreams that have not come true.

HABBERLEY VALLEY

DOWN in Habberley Valley the silver birches
grow,

And all the winding mossy ways are glistening in
the sun,

The birds are calling softly, and the fitful breezes
blow —

O come with me! O come with me, before the
day is gone!

There's oak and ash, and pine and fir, that clothe
the Valley steeps,

There's soft green grass and fairy ferns, and in
the breathless noon

I've seen the shady dell wherein Great Pan, wine-
wearied, sleeps,

And oft he holds strange revels there at night
beneath the Moon.

Down in Habberley Valley the silver birches
grow,

HABBERLEY VALLEY

And on a glorious Summer's day 'tis there I
long to go —

Young Cupid hides with his bow and arrows
Down where the winding footpath narrows,
O loudly, loudly lilt the birds, and softly, softly
hum the bees,
And from morn till eve the butterfly wings among
the whispering trees!

Down in Habberley Valley I saw the Satyrs dance
With woodland Nymphs and singing boys, their
brows enchapleted
With roses wild and ivy green. O many the love-
lit glance
They cast behind on seeing me ere through the
wood they fled.

There's song and sunshine mingling with the odour
of the pines,
And once I heard the flutes of Pan across the
Valley calling,
I've seen the trees in gowns of gold when the
burning sun declines,
And stood in silent reverie as the dusk was softly
falling.

HABBERLEY VALLEY

Down in Habberley Valley the silver birches
grow,

And high above the trees at night the stars are
all aglow,

The Moon glides softly with silver feet,

The nightjar calls, and lovers meet,

And slowly, slowly on they go like shadows in a
moonlit land,

And the trees they rustle and laugh, and then
grow silent, they understand.

Down in Habberley Valley a Poet stood alone

And sighed to think of the sad world of turmoil
whence he came,

He breathed his spirit forth unto each flower and
tree and stone,

And all the fairy voices heard that called upon his
name.

There's many a song you have not sung, O poet of
the World!

But you are young, and love us yet with innocent
delight,

HABBERLEY VALLEY

O have you heard the bluebells ring and seen the
 roses curled,
And drunk the nectar of the Gods, and found the
 Heart of Light?

Down in Habberley Valley you'll hear the blue-
 bells ring
With many a chiming peal of song when all the
 fairies sing,
 The bees in bass hum in monotone,
 The lark in alto sings alone,
And sweetly, sweetly on the wind the woodland
 song is upward borne,
O come and hear the choral chant we sing in the
 roseate Dawn!

Down in Habberley Valley the shadows gently
 grow,
And all around sweet voices blend their music with
 the wind,
While down the pathways lightly flit the shades of
 long ago,
O lover from the shadowland, perchance your
 love you'll find!

HABBERLEY VALLEY

There's many a voice shall sing no more with
earthly accents sweet,
But you may hear the spirit song beneath the hush
of night,
Ah, lover in the moonlit land, who knows but you
may meet
With one long kiss, and one low sigh, and find the
Heart of Light?

Down in Habberley Valley the trees are weirdly
still,
There's not a breeze among the leaves that
sleep in moonlight chill:
The hooting owl, forgetting its prey,
Shivers and longs for the sleep of Day,
And quickly, quickly, beating hearts turn with the
changing tide of Time,
And a star sails forth on the sea of Heaven as all
the planets chime.

Down in Habberley Valley the silver birches grow,
The air is filled with the song of the birds and
everything is gay,

HABBERLEY VALLEY

O come with me and wander where the pine-tree
branches throw
A cooling shade for youth and maid upon a Sum-
mer's day.

There's many a tale you have not heard, O maid
with magic eyes,
Ah, you may hear a song more sweet than ever
bird can sing,
O let him take your hand in his and fill the air with
sighs,
And he with kisses on your cheeks red roses there
shall bring.

Down in Habberley Valley the cuckoo's two-
fold voice
Through all the air, from crag to crag, will call
" Rejoice! Rejoice! "

Your hearts will beat as never before,
And Love shall teach you his golden lore,
Most happy Love in woodland ways! Sing out,
O birds! Croon soft, O breeze!
O ye pines and firs in cloistral groves, chant your
most tuneful litanies!

SHE MOVES, THE LADY OF MY LOVE

SHE moves, the lady of my love,
A vision of delight,
And everything she touches seems
To glory in her sight;
A white rose is not fair as she,
Her lips are poppy-red,
And I have pressed them in delight
Until their colour fled;
Her throat is as a marble tower
That guards the citadel
Where are two hills of virgin snow
That Love has loved so well.
Ah! ye who have not loved or seen
The wonder of her breast,
Nor ever found so warm and soft
A refuge of deep rest,
Nor felt her sweet, warm breath play o'er
Your buried face and hair,
Nor kissed the rose-red lips of love
And worshipped one so fair —

THE LADY OF MY LOVE

How can poor words have song enough
To sing her grace aright —
Is not the lady of my love
A vision of delight?
Her eyes are as twin torches in
The heaven of her face,
Her brow is white as ivory,
And in her speech I trace
The melodies which happy birds
Have taught her in the ways
Of sunny meadows filled with song
Thro' golden summer days.
Her hair is fragrant as the wind
That kisses violet meads,
And falls in tresses o'er the brow
Where Love his welcome reads;
Sweet as the rapture of the night
Is that of waking day,
And when together, hand in hand,
We walk the woodland way,
Her presence, like a breath of Spring,
Calls forth the flowers to greet
The happy glances of her eyes,
And kisses of her feet.

THE LADY OF MY LOVE

The birds, when she approaches nigh,
Sing louder than before,
How lavish seems the woodbine bush
With all its scented lore!
And sunnier are the sunny ways,
And bluer are the skies,
To match the sunshine of her face,
The blueness of her eyes;
And then I knew a secret sense
She has of Nature's mind,
For once methought I saw, but now
I know my sight was blind:
She opens up a wonderland
Wherein we daily tread:
The lily is a mystery
On which her soul has fed;
She knows the secret of each flower
Like any woodland elf,
And tells me every secret, save
The secret of herself,—
And that I shall not crave, enough
For me, in wonder bright,
She moves, the lady of my love,
A vision of delight.

APPASSIONATA

SOMETIMES I wonder why I suffer so —
A stranger's face, what could it mean for
me?

Once seen by most forgotten soon — ah, no!
For me those eyes, those lips will ever be
The substance of the dreams that oft I dream.
Your face attracted me, your voice rang clear,
Your eyes were lustrous as sun-burnished pools,
Your thought not of philosophies that bear
The imprint of the academic schools —
Therefore we spent the hours in vain delight,
Riding the sparkling waves at early morn,
Or playing tennis in the noon, while night
Echoed with little loves that in our arms were
borne.

And now I make lament — the old lament,
Your loveliness will fade, your youth will die,
And so I shudder, knowing days that went
Swiftly and gloriously, like all things, by;

APPASSIONATA

It gives me pain to think that youth must fade,
I sat and gloried in your eyes' soft gleam,
I gazed and thanked the Deity who made
Such glory for my heart to feast upon —
Yet never once I spake to you of this,
For you those days are dead, are dead and
gone:

For you, maybe, the moment held its bliss,
Wherefore my joy is somewhat fraught with
pain

Knowing those days will never come again,
Knowing that you will laugh, and live content,
While all my days are passed in dreary banish-
ment.

Have I been born to live in vain — to make
A god for memory's worship, only that?
Will Beauty's fountain never flow and slake
This thirsty soul of mine you wonder at?
Oh, sometimes, such my love, I wish you dead
That I may close your eyes, and kiss your
mouth,

And place upon my heart your handsome head,
Perchance my thirsty soul would ease its drouth,

APPASSIONATA

For then, unknowing, I might worship you —
Which once I did in secret lest you knew.

Ah! when we parted on our separate ways
You little knew my pain — those happy days
Were happy days for you, no more — to me
They are as heirlooms, fraught with misery,
For future years to hoard — when we are old,
When Youth's fine glow is gone and all our days
are cold.

Oh! frail, sad heart that falls in Beauty's snare
And locks its love within a silent tomb,
No words betray its utter grief — nor dare
One look reveal its secret — 'tis my doom
To suffer in mute agony nor speak
The secrets those who love may to their loved
ones break.

Pass from me face that moves my lips to song,
That fills my heart with sadness, fills these eyes
With tears that are for you, to you belong,
These tears you must not see lest you despise!
What are my restless nights that see your face
Shining through silent darkness unto you? —

APPASSIONATA

Something unknown, unguessed,—yet *I* can
trace

Each subtlety of change, most sure and true —
As when you smiled — I hold its magic yet,
A radiance that never my fond heart will forget.

Therefore my joy is somewhat fraught with
pain

Distilled from happy days recalled in vain;
We met, we spoke, we parted, now with me
The vision of your face is dwelling constantly.

LOVE'S SILENCE

I HAVE not called you fair,
True loverwise,
Nor praised your golden hair
And heavenly eyes,
Nor pressed you warm and close
Against my breast —
For all things such as those
May naught attest;

But I have dreamed of you
In sleepless nights,
Your speech has thrilled me through
With sharp delights,
And I have watched you move,
With yearning heart —
Passion of such deep love
Could words impart?

Ah! dearest one, I break
All bonds of speech

LOVE'S SILENCE

With deeper thought. O take
My love, and teach
Language no lips can speak,
Only souls hear,
My words are all too weak,
Your love so dear!

LA GLORIOSA DONNA

(Beatrice)

I

THOU art the dream of the beauty dreamed,
O lady fair,
Radiant as the Moon hath seemed
When all the breathless sky lay bare,
Bathing itself in the glorious light;
Thou art the Moon of the poet's night
Once dark with care.

II

The stars look not in the Moon's bright face,
O lady mine!
They hide themselves in abysmal space;
And so mine eyes look not in thine
Lest they should burn with a fervour found
In the sanctuary of a love profound
And a joy divine.

LA GLORIOSA DONNA

III

Wert thou the Helen that brought to Troy
The Greeks of old,
And filled with passion the beauteous boy? —
Oh I marvel not that men were bold: —
One smile of thine would be balm for death,
And thy praise would take the dying breath
Ere the lips were cold.

IV

I wonder not that a poet loved
Afar, in pain,
Or that through Hell to Heaven he moved,
And lived his life but a glimpse to gain
Of the lady loved by a speechless boy;
Mine eyes can worship thee, but my joy
Seeks words in vain.

V

The thought unuttered, like music, dies
In a pulsing dream,
For I dare not trust nor voice nor eyes

LA GLORIOSA DONNA

In fear that a word or a look would seem
Less than the meaning it should convey,
And I pale as a star in the light of Day,
 'Neath thine eyes' soft gleam!

ANDROMACHE

(For Israel Zangwill)

THE still noon was come, and all the
steeps

Lay somnolent within the swimming air
That breathed among the trees with heavy sighs
Scented with asphodel. Beyond the meads,
Now shadowless, the beechwoods, tressed with
vine,

Lifted their branches in the golden light,
And where the cloud-capped hill with many
streams

Shone golden-veined, the leafy mountain ash
Motionless slept; the moan of many doves,
Within the poplars grown athwart the sky,
Was breeze borne with the scent of lilac fields.

Along the border of the stream-girt plain,
Leaving the city gates, a woman came
Threading the olive woods by primrose paths
That led to Thetis' Close (where Peleus once

ANDROMACHE

In olden days brought Thetis to his bed),
And through the sunny woodland up she toiled
Towards the fountain by the elm trees' shade
Where women came with pitchers all day long.

Slowly along the steep ravine she clomb
As one deep-stricken to the heart with woe,
And all her robes hung fold on fold about
Her grief-expressive figure, dark, enswathed
Save where the ivory brow gleamed forth above
Two eyes that were as wells of sorrow where
No sunlight ever glanced. Then as she moved,
Her voice broke forth in sweetness, and the sigh
Of welling tears ran o'er each pause, and all
The woods were stilled as when a storm o'erclouds
And thro' the brooding silence steals the wind.

“O mighty Zeus! Lord of the Courts of
Heaven,
I would thou hadst not spared me to this day,
Nor led me captive to the land of Hellas,
For who shall hail me now? I once was fair
And drew the lordly Hector to my breast,—
White-armed Andromache whose lovely brow,

ANDROMACHE

Shining beneath fair tresses, knew the kiss
Of Priam's son. Alas! for I am she,
Daughter of Aëtion, Hector sought
Throughout Hypoplacus where long I dwelt
Loved of my sire and brothers seven.

“ Ah! there
He came and kissed me, called me by my name —
' O fair, white-browed Andromache! ' he said,
Taking my hand in his heroic clasp,
And drawing me to bliss upon his breast;
And thence to lofty Ilium, where his sire
Ruled over mighty Troas, I was led
All envied of my beauty and my lord.”

She ceased and moved towards the beechwood's
shade,
There sate, and in the noon made sad complaint.

“ O mighty Zeus! he was a lord of men —
Strong-armed, high-browed, and leader in the
field;
Beloved of all, by me the best beloved,
Who knew him more and loved him none the less.

ANDROMACHE

Woe to the day that fickle-hearted Helen
Came with her evil ways and luring eyes
To wreak the fall of Ilium. When the plain
Grew dark with armed Hellenes, he came forth,
The great-souled Hector, seeking me, and there,
Upon the high wall by the Scæan gates,
He found me, with our babe Scamandrius
Rocked in the nurse's arms, wherein he shone
More like a beauteous star than hapless babe.

“ O mighty Zeus, my heart is breaking, hear!
The lordly Hector took me in his arms
And held me as I wept. For all his words
Were sorrowful, as words of all farewells:
And on his tongue a dreadful prophecy
Foretold the end of married bliss, the end
Of all the joys that make a husband dear;
Of Death, and Ruin, when the lofty walls
Of smitten Ilium crashed to earth. Whereon
His eyes grew pitiful, his words grew sad
And slow. He bade me venerate his name
Who loved his country more than wife and babe,
Holding the commonweal above his own;
But I, with tearful pleadings, then besought

ANDROMACHE

His pitiful thought towards me, of love bereft,
And widowed of my lord and guardian soul;
But all my words stayed not his stern resolve.
With commendations sweet, he gave his son
Into my sorrowing care, and bade me tend
His training, to the end that men should praise
The valour of the son above the sire.
Then to my fragrant bosom low his brow
Was bent in silence, and with soothing words
He bade me go perform the homely tasks,
And with one soul-surrendering farewell
He turned, and went from sight for evermore."

As the wind in the dark and raging night
Wails thro' the rain-drenched woods, and slowly
dies

With fitful moans to silence, so her voice
Came thro' the olives, o'er the sunlit sward
And died unechoing in the sultry noon.
Throwing the veil from off her moon-white brow
And brushing back the tresses, with two eyes
Whose passion lit the darkness of their woe,
She lifted up her voice, and as she spake
The startled birds flew out with glimmering wings,
And sought the voiceless arbour of the pines.

ANDROMACHE

“ O mighty Zeus ! would hate implacable
Could hound to Hades him who slew my lord !
I then would praise thy justice, for in truth,
Wherefore do men reap victory and fame
Because a thousand women mourn their lords
Whose pale, unbosomed faces looked no more
Upon their woe-worn features ? Fatherless,
Young children listen for their sires, and curse
The dreaded name Achilles, whose sure spear
Pierced thro’ the heart of every Trojan dame.
Divine Achilles, such his name of men,
But all the venom of despair, the hate
Of abject misery, I summon up,
Nor words, nor imprecations breathed by ghouls
Dwelling in Stygian darkness, hold the hate
That labours in my heart towards this man.

“ He slew my father, and with rapine foul
O’erran his rich dominions, brought to ruin
The sovereign city, lofty-gated Thebes.
Moreover, of the issue of my sire,
His seven noble sons he slew ; and I,
The miserable wreckage of a line
Illustrious in war, renowned in peace,

ANDROMACHE

Beheld my butchered lord, with bleeding corse
Dragged in the chariot's wake; and when the walls
Of stricken Troy were sundered, from my arms
The wailing babe was dashed to awful death."

Here ceased her voice in sorrow, and the hair,
Falling about her shoulders, veiled the face
With anguish bowed, and when she spake again
Her cheeks were pale, her eyes saw not, but
glowed

With wild intensity of boundless hate
Whose passion froze the blood within her cheeks
And marbled all the face in speechless grief.

"Jove, and ye other gods, pursue with wrath
Thro' Hades' dawnless gates this man whose foul
Remorseless conquest widowed me of love.
Hearken, ye gods! I dwell a captive here
Unransomed; to a base and loveless bed
Forced with rude hands of Neoptolemus,
The wolfish son begot of savage sire;
And when my ravished limbs are freed at dawn
They labour daily, on this toilsome steep,
Carrying water from the fountain head.

ANDROMACHE

Ye gods, I crave one mercy. Let me die
That I may go to him whose lonely soul
Waits comfortless by Lethe's songless shore;
And in his glance the deathly glade shall smile
Like sunlit meadows after springtide rain:
The leafless trees shall blossom, and the birds
Break forth in song, and they among the shades
Who, shadowlike, move mournfully in gloom,
Shall see a breaking light, breathe purer air,
For radiant as a star engulfed in night
My face will shine and seek him out, and we
Together then shall sink in Lethe's flood
Forgetting sorrow, for with him I know
Where'er we dwell, Elysium will be."

TRIBUTE

(For Edward J. O'Brien)

NOT with the silence of the night,
Nor with the gladness of the day
But in that gentle, dusky light
Which gathers when the western way
Runs to a sea of burning gold
You came to me, like eventide
Whose soft and trailing clouds enfold
Meadow and mere and mountain-side.
Your voice was as a mountain rill,
Silver-sweet as its music-fall
When shadows creep and birds are still
And the great moon reigns over all.
Arrayed in wonder like the night,
Stars in the heaven of your face,
You came to me with love's delight
And found in me a resting-place.
I have known great and gracious things
And worshipped beauty everywhere,
Sunsets and ruins, swallows' wings

TRIBUTE

Skimming the surface of the mere,
Roses filled with the morning dew,
The creamy cones of chestnut-trees,
Wonderful chords that thrilled me through
When thin white fingers swept the keys,
Old houses and old English lawns
And meadows with their shining streams,
Dogs with great eyes and timid fawns,
Chairs and old chests, and books and dreams;
Italy with her sunny squares
And purple vineyards by the sea,
The gay Piazza with its wares
In wax and wood and ivory,
And all the colour and the noise;
Or the Blue Grotto in whose pool
Falls a swift shower of diving boys
Ungirdled, silver-limbed and cool;
Spain with her tales of old romance,
Her dark-eyed women fierce in love;
That flower garden, southern France —
I know these all, and yet above
Their beauty and their charm you reign
Supreme in glory like the moon
O'er mountain mere and stream-girt plain,

TRIBUTE

For in your eyes there is the boon
Which hearts grown weary of the sun
Seek and rejoice in, the great calm
That love abiding gives to one;
Yet in my heart a faint alarm
Still lingers, born of this new bliss,
And I have fear lest you should know it —
To sing the rapture of your kiss
You should have loved a better poet.

IN THE WOOD

DEAR heart, through all the afternoon
I slumbered where the woodland shade
Was the deepest from the glare of June,
And as the branches o'er me swayed

Singing that old-world song which pines
For ever sing, as if they found
A solace in their murmured lines,
I weaved strange fancies to the sound;

And in each sigh I heard your sighs,
And every whisper cried, "'Tis I!"
Until I seemed to feel your eyes
Fall on me, for I know not why —

Though you are dead, today I felt
That union which of old we knew,
The richness of your hair I smelt
Until the greater wonder grew

IN THE WOOD

That you were not, for, so it seemed,
The years had brought no change since last
Beneath the pine-trees' shade you dreamed
With me that Future, now the Past.

Who knows, dear heart, perchance you move
Nearer in love than I in thought,
And with these premonitions prove
Love is not far and comes unsought.

A CHILD'S EYES

EYES of a child — twin worlds of light,
What have ye seen that visions bright
Still kindle with a Paradisal hue :
Something retained of all the heavenly wonder,
The glorious light,
The realm ethereal that angels view,
Where worlds are rent asunder :
Something of these within remembered sight
Make of them worlds of light ?

Yea, even so it must be, we are grown
Heavy with pain and moan,
That all the wonder of this wondrous world,
The stars that, censor-wise,
Swing down the vaulted Night,
The glowing panorama of the skies
When through the Dawn's wide portal sweeps the
Sun
'Mid roseate clouds unfurled,
Ruling his realm of light,

A CHILD'S EYES

Yea, even these no longer stir the heart,
No longer find reflection in our eyes,
Nor wake the wonder of unknowing days,
When, with unasking, unperturbèd gaze,
 A child's wide eyes,
 Disdainful of being wise,
Something of all their glory to the earth impart.

Therefore I voyage in thy fancy-bark,
Through thy great wonders dark,
Knowing they mirror all the heaven that glows
 (Since even wayside pools can mirror Heaven,
 How much to thee is given!)
Like an unfurlèd rose,
Petal on petal, fragrant with the wind
 That blows o'er all mankind;
And lo! with sails outblown,
My swift bark wings o'er seas whose undertone
Echoes the chanting of that Paradisal zone
 Whence lately, life-elated,
 With joy precipitated,
Thou, little child, caught'st up those wondrous
 skies
 Into thy magic eyes,

A CHILD'S EYES

Bringing to earth the glory they had seen,
Retaining still the lustre of what THEY once had
been!

On thro' the mirrored pools of thy reflective sight,
On, o'er the bar of Heaven, the swift bark sped,
Thro' countries of the Dead,
The Dead so dead in that, as yet unborn,
They wait for Morn,
Even as thou didst once, in state forlorn,
When at the summoning trumpet call of Life,
The curtain rising on the Stage of Strife,
With yearning limbs, at last
The dread inaction past,
Robed in prenatal glory down to Earth
They joyfully will sing to wombs of human birth;

On thro' the land where hands unseen have
wrought
The rainbow's glory and the poet's thought,
Upward I sailed, still sailed, lo! Paradise!
The argent-gated City set with stars
And sunshine-fretted bars;
Thence, ere they lifted for my passing through —

A CHILD'S EYES

“ Say! What most treasurest
On Memory's palimpsest? ”

In angel-throated accents came the cry:

And I,
Thought not nor knew,
But straightway answerèd,
Whereat the bars upsped,
“ O Keeper of the Gates of Paradise,
A child's bright eyes!

For visions of this realm they hold most true! ”

Then in great glory, loud, hosanna-wise,
Rang all the quivering skies —

“ Light in a baby's eyes
Cometh from Paradise! ”

And thus in joinèd anthem sang the stars,
Thus all the ways of Heaven rang with song,
Till I, among

The diapason music of the swinging firmament,
With fear downbent,
And lo! with glow

Of steadfast light and unperturbèd gaze,
Once more with great amaze,

My waking sense outdreamed its dream and
saw —

A CHILD'S EYES

No starry plains of Heaven, no Paradise,
No Court where sat enthroned the Giver of the
 Law,
No! greater my surprise —
Only a child's bright eyes!

How little and how mean
The fruits of those who glean
The harvest fields of knowledge: scholarship
 Fades in the sight of that unthinking glance
'Neath which, as in a trance,
The Universe unvows her vestalship,
And from her unseen face lets fall the veil
'Neath which the glimmering form, but half
 discerned,
 Lay hid from one who yearned,
Who cried, with passionate craving for the truth,
While swift, onpassing years with little ruth,
 Hearing the cry, beheld him strive and fail;
And lo! when Science with her ordered arts
 Had striven, with the cunning she imparts,
And, baffled, stood before the fine intricacies
 Of this Earth's mysteries,
A little child with sunshine in his smile,

A CHILD'S EYES

With glint of roguish wile,
With one low cry of innocent delight,
Opened his eyes so bright
And saw the rainbow's beauty, while the seer
Saw nothing there,
For Knowledge, specious Critic,
Shattered the rainbow's glory to colours analytic!

Therefore unto the child, methinks, is given
The insight into Heaven,
For we are lost to wonder in this world,
While in our facts upcurled,
We live as lives the grub within the rose,
Eating the beauty from the heart of things
Nor heed wherein the secret of it springs:
Yet eyes, in which
The rainbow's glory lives again, receive
The impress of the wonder they perceive,
Nor guess the secret of it all, nor grieve;
Wherefore am I,
Unknowing, but observant, greatly rich,
Become the treasure-house of Beauty's store
That, more and more,
The wonders that delight my seeing eye,
May therein lie:

A CHILD'S EYES

So thus to keep the rapture of the child,
Whose simple heart with Beauty is beguiled,
Most happily beguiled!

Once on a time,
That sad, all-suffering time,
When presaging song had filled my heart with
 woe,
I chanced to go,
A forlorn songster, smutted with the grime
Of the most heartless City of the World,
Sickened with undeserving long neglect,
 Into a place where spread
On lettered shelves the great, undying dead,
Whose singing souls, in pilgrimage elect,
Still wing them down the ringing ways of Time,
With Fame's immortal banners o'er them furled:

And taking down a vellum-covered book,
I sought a nook
Wherein to scent the fragrance of its rhyme;
Ah, then how shall I tell this thing so great,
What song, what lyric rapture magical
Can fitly tell an act grown tragical

A CHILD'S EYES

With cherished fondness in my foolish heart? —

 This little act beyond all estimate,
For 'twas at lowest ebb of Fortune's flood
A child intuitively understood,

 A little child that in most tragic-wise
 Looked with her big wide eyes,
Then spake, and changed my Hell to singing
 Paradise!

 O voice! O child's sweet voice!
 That made my heart rejoice,
That shattered all the bonds that bound me in
 despair,
 Beside my chair,
A fairy book you showed me with delight,
A little trusting, wide-eyed fairy wight
 With golden hair —
No Titian's Madonna e'er embraced
 A child more fair,
More sweet, more innocent, more angel-faced!

Therefore, methinks, unto the child is given
 The insight into Heaven,
Nor solely that, but into human hearts,

A CHILD'S EYES

How otherwise that messenger divined
A human voice grown kind
In multitudinous solitude I pined?
 Yea, Love itself imparts
To the clear freshness of a child's young eyes;
 The newborn child retains
The undimmed vision of the heavenly plains!

Eyes of a child — twin worlds of light,
What have ye seen that visions bright
Still kindle with a Paradisal hue —
Something retained of all the heavenly wonder,
 The glorious light
Of realms ethereal that angels view,
 Where worlds are rent asunder
 And God rides in the thunder? —
Something of these within remembered sight
Make of thine eyes twin worlds of most celestial
 light!

THE DARK YEARS



CHARING CROSS

ALL through the night in silence they come
and go,
The Red Cross cars with headlights low,
And maimed humanity on stretchers lain
Glides down the streets of London—while I stand
Watching this slow processional of pain.
All through the night unending flows the stream
Whence now and then a weary, bloodless hand
Answers the greeting of the silent crowd;
A pale and stricken face smiles back again
Upon the kind, dim faces that throng as in a
dream.

Over them as they journey, patiently bowed
A nurse keeps watch in fear lest now at last
The fluttering spirit leave the battered cage,
And, eager for eternity, slip past
The guardian tending the poor, broken frame
With its disc and number and stencilled name.

CHARING CROSS

And as I watch, a rebel thought
Stirs in my mind, for strange it seems
That down this highway of pain unending
There flow the streams
Of human traffic homeward brought,
Broken and useless, marred with terrible scars,
Eyeless and limbless and shattered, while under
the stars
Flow other streams that, outward wending,
Carry the youth of the nation in splendid vigour —
And those streams flow into these at the touch of
a trigger!

Long months of training that splendid humanity
needed,
The toil and brain of a nation evolved it, the
wealth
Of the wide world's meadows and mines was
brought for its use,
And with careful eyes and hands it was weeded
and weeded
Until it was virile with courage and perfect
health;

CHARING CROSS

And here is the end of it all, and we count the
loss

Recording the glory, forgetting this human refuse
Left by extravagant war — borne away in the
night

Swiftly and silently. God! here again at a cross
Crucified man in a dark world dies; the sight
Burns to the brain, and I cry, as once One cried —
“My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken
me?” — then

I watch with dumb anguish the endless procession
of men,

The remnants picked up from the waste in the
fields; they who died

Flow no more in the stream, they can rest; and
only it matters

That Science should skilfully mend what it skil-
fully shatters.

ECLIPSE

HOW shall we sing, love, in these days
When darkness covers all the earth,
And Death alone has splendid praise,
How can our dreams find happy birth?

There is no music in the wood
But mocks the heavy heart of me,
This is the age of iron and blood
And sisters none hath Charity.

Out of the darkness into light
At dawn the sons of men will come,
Then shall begin our tireless fight,
We shall not in that hour be dumb;

There is a question to be asked,
There is an answer to be given,
And traitors who shall stand unmasked,
And new worlds made from old worlds riven.

FUTILITY

THEY send me, Charles, long letters on your
death,

Full of fair phrases culled from poetry
That do not blind me — let them save their
breath;

The nectared lies of immortality,
The sounding rhetoric, the pompous phrase,
The talk of supreme sacrifice, the great
Reward — what are these 'gainst your withered
days,

Your dear lost face, the squalor of your fate?
That you were brave I know, but still you clung
To life that meant so much; they say you cried
In that last hour feeling you were so young,
And desperately fought for life — and died.
These letters, Charles, they mock me with their
lies,

Their borrowed phrases that belittle life
And love and laughter — I can see your eyes
As once they glowed, your body like a knife

FUTILITY

Tempered and flashing in a summer sea,
Or hear your voice enraptured over books,
Or in the bathroom singing merrily
At early morn, and days in river nooks
And tennis sets — these memories all seem
Like ghosts that haunt your room now you are
gone,
And make me think your end is but a dream,
How can it be the end — at twenty-one?
But when I read these letters, then I know
You will not come again, nor does their praise
Lighten the heaviness of this great blow,
I cannot kiss your brow, nor see the place
Where they have left you; as they write of fame,
Your “splendid gift,” my only thought is this —
What will they care ten years hence for your
name,
Who cares a damn who died at Salamis?

THE DAYS OF OLD

THEY are gone — the friends I had,
Through the day, alone and sad,
Through the places where we met
I walk, dreaming of them yet;
And the voices once so dear
Never break upon my ear;
All are gone — no voices call,
No familiar footsteps fall,
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

They are gone and with them went
All the happy days we spent;
In the café or the street
There are left no friends to greet
With the cheery words of old,
And the empty places hold
Each a ghost of memory
That most faintly smiles at me;
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

THE DAYS OF OLD

They are gone, and I am left
Like a thing of life bereft,
Holding dear the things they said —
Treasured things now they are dead;
And at night the old refrain
Rises from their throats again,
And from battlefields they rise
With the old light in their eyes,
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

They are gone — some will return,
But for some in vain I yearn,
Death has claimed their swift young lives,
And their fame alone survives;
In the night-time oft I cry .
To the unrelenting sky —
O dead comrades, dear and true,
Would that now I slept with you,
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

THE RETURN

PROUD to be hers, of England, war-worn,
shattered,
Yet holding up their heads in regal poise,
They will return, her death-forsaken boys,
Triumphant, though the ranks are scarred and
scattered
Beyond formation evermore, so battered
And broken, memories only, swept like toys
In disarray — yet once with mighty noise,
With drums they marched away when Honour
mattered.

When Honour mattered! Now returning, these,
How shall our Honour stand, our duty seem
To those who in the conflict kept a dream
Sacred, a thought of meadows, pools and trees
Of homeland — shall this England, that is ours
By their great strength, reward not their spent
pow'rs?

INHERITANCE

DEAD statesmen, prophets, poets, princes,
kings,

And long dumb generations of this land
Who gave no less the labour of the hand,
And strength of sinew, those just offerings
You made are ours, this generation springs
From dreams that rose within you when you
scanned

The future and with valiant purpose planned
Our large inheritance of splendid things.

We are the heirs of greatness, for our blood
Is regal with the dynasty of Fate,
We must not fail those we perpetuate
Nor check the purpose of that swelling flood
Which sweeps through time down hills of History
To Freedom in world-wide humanity.

THE DELIVERER

NO star will herald him, no trumpets blare,
The age that gives him birth shall hardly
know

It travails for his sake, nor watch him grow
To greatness; yet the agony it bare
Hath formed him, and a providential care
Moulded his mind with great events; the flow
Of adverse currents caught him, and the blow
That shook the nation wakened a spirit rare.

His eyes are lit with Hope, his heart has heard
Harmony triumphing where Tumult reigns,
And Truth, traduced, speaks from his mouth the
word

That is not shaped for dual ends, nor feigns
Construction while it undermines. No bird
Hails Dawn with surer flight than he sustains!

ON SOME POLITICIANS OF THE PERIOD

IS this the England of those glorious men
Who wrought the charter of our liberty?
Hampden, doth not thy spirit rise again
In wrath against this heavier tyranny,
And thou, O Cromwell, swift to answer when
Liberty was imperilled, wilt thou be
Silent in this dark hour, nor Milton's pen
Command to write thy thunderous decree?

For England is a land oppressed where breed
The vultures of the law, a brood that cries
Over the living flesh whereon they feed;
Humanity, immersed in blood and lies,
Pollutes the air of Heaven with its stench,
And Death strides gaily on from trench to trench.

LIBERTY IMPERILLED

NOT without cause, just and unshakeable,
Will we surrender up the cherished prize
Of individual liberty, so well
And nobly held; for if the future lies
In danger yet no warrant to despise
Ancestral freedom, power invincible,
Moulding our nation's form, doth yet arise —
Freedom alone can hold the force of Hell.

Therefore in British hearts this day the thought
Of mighty heritage shall make us calm
Amid tumultuous conflict, and maintain
Forces unchallenged, victories unbought
Of craven minds coerced by war's alarm,
Whose madness wrecks a world to count a gain.

DAWN

THIS is our Dawn, our Day! Are we not
blessed

Whose eyes behold this miracle of Time,
This swift transition from the filth and grime
That choked the body of a world oppressed,
Which Custom bound, Convention overdressed
And fell Tradition drugged? — a pantomime
Of puppets dancing in the yellow lime,
Wealth's minions in a farce by Fate suppressed.

Delivered from that Night, now we are men,
Creation is within our hands! the vision
Dreamed in the darkness will rise up again
From ruins of a sick world's dead derision,
And Youth shall know its hour! Youth that on
Death
Has looked and turns to Life with quickened
breath!

I WILL ARISE

(For Holbrook Jackson)

I WILL arise.

Too long has the night been over land,
For, the terror departing, the dawn is at hand,
The morning skies
Tremble from pearl into red,
And the growing light
Awakens a world that was dead.

On the face of the world let the dawn break,
Oh never again
Shall this midnight of madness return,
The dumb anguish, the pain
Unforgotten with letters of fire that brand and
burn —
Not these, O Lord, not these be ours again.

We have suffered that Youth should be taken
And spent as a breath,

I WILL ARISE

We knew that we gambled with Life, we con-
sorted with Death,
And prayed for the dawn, when the reason should
cry —
“ Great spirit of Man, awaken!
Or evermore die ! ”

Then in his heart each man said low —
“ Many and many, in quenchless nobility ever
They marched with a wonderful light in their
eyes,
With great courage aglow
They arise and depart and never, never
Return to the hearts for whom they made sacri-
fice.”

I will arise,
For it shall not be that this gift of Youth
Be squandered and scattered as sand
For redemption of Truth;
The flame that from Ignorance sprang and by
Hatred was fanned,
Shall it burn for ever across a shrivelled land?

I WILL ARISE

Night that was dark with such hatred, the Dawn
 blows cold,
The fire of conquest dies, the unbridled lust
Sickens with surfeit, the fields enfold
Millions that fell in the clamour and now are dust;
And they who wait in thy darkness and ceaseless
 pray,
They are older than years,
Their sleepless eyes
Keep vigil, and tearless, having shed all tears,
They wait, and waiting say —
“ In that dawn with confession to make I will
 arise.”

Youth that has died with such wonderful grace,
Young limbs that ran lightly in deadly ways,
Is there nothing bequeathed immortally ours
Save this — in a maddened world, as a tiger de-
 vours

The deer in the glade, implacable Hate devoured
Your beauty, and left but a race deflowered?

Yet Spring when it comes will seem yours,
The immutable grace of the earth will recall you
 again,

I WILL ARISE

The flooded meadow, soft twilight, the lamp in-
doors,

The chair and the chessboard, the unfinished book
Turned down at a page where Fate wrote
“ FINIS ” — ah! pain

That sears the heart betrayed by a casual look.

The new world in the rayless night
Lies somewhere, as sure as the song of the bird,
As the sun whose light
And warmth fail never the seed in the deep earth
stirred;

And since by the folly of man, by his blundering
thought

This tribulation, this hell was conceived and
brought

To deadly fruition of purpose that holds him in
terror,

The dawn is ours to herald; confessing error,
Redeemed by Youth's most splendid sacrifice,
We will arise.

The dead in the valley sleep, the dawn-wind
blows,

Beautiful sleepers are they whose names none
knows,

I WILL ARISE

Whose memory burns fainter through the years
That pass until a generation grows
Which cares not if they late or early slept;
But I have kept
Under my anguish, deep in a well of tears,
Springs of grief that will dry not, that will flood
At every slight neglect of future years,
And when their sacrifice stirs not the blood
And some make question of this stricken time,
Daring to doubt the wisdom of the price,
Lord, Thou shalt see then with what wrath sublime
In witness of their faith I will arise!

LUSITANIA

SAILOR, what do you see that you stand
With quivering lips and trembling hand,
For the sea is calm and the sky is clear,
What do you fear?

“Sailor, why are you dumb, the sea
Is soft with the summer days to be,
The gulls flash by in the sunlit air,
Why do you stare?”

“Oh, look in the sea if you would learn,
For this is the day the dead return,
The murdered women and children rise
With pitiful cries.

“Their white hands beckon us from the wave,
They never rest in their moving grave,
They sigh their woes to the moaning deep,
And never sleep.

LUSITANIA

“ They wait for an end which they know is sure,
Then they will rest and rise no more;
Vengeance is mine — they heard God say —
I will repay.”

WATCHMEN OF THE NIGHT

LORD of the seas' great wilderness,
The light-grey warships cut the wind,
The headland dwindles less and less,
The great waves, breaking, drench and blind
The stern-faced watcher on the deck,
While England fades into a speck.

Afar on that horizon grey
The sleepy homesteads one by one
Shine with their cheerful lights as day
Dies in the valley and is gone,
While the new moon comes o'er the hill
And floods the landscape, white and still.

But outward 'mid the homeless waste
The battle fleet held on its way;
On either side the torn seas raced,
Over the bridge blew up the spray;
The quartermaster at the wheel
Steered through the night his ship of steel.

WATCHMEN OF THE NIGHT

Once, from a masthead, blinked a light —
The Admiral spoke unto the Fleet;
Swift answers flashed along the night,
The charthouse glimmered through the sleet;
A bell rang from the engine-room,
And, ere it ceased — the great guns' boom.

Then thunder through the silence broke
And rolled along the sullen deep;
A hundred guns flashed fire and spoke,
Which England heard not in her sleep
Nor dreamed of, while her fighting sons
Fed and fired the blazing guns.

Dawn broke in England, sweet and clear,
Birds, in the brake, the lark in heaven
Made musical the morning air,
But distant, shattered, scorched and riven,
Gathered the ships — aye, dawn was well
After the night's dark, raging hell.

But some came not with break of light,
Nor looked upon the saffron dawn;

WATCHMEN OF THE NIGHT

They keep the watch of endless Night,
On the soft breast of ocean borne.
O waking England, rise and pray
For sons who guard thee night and day.

SCAPA FLOW, May, 1916.

THE DOVER PATROL

WE are the grey destroyers,
The hornets of the Fleet;
The tall ships, our employers,
Disdain our lonely beat.
Through night and day we prow! about,
Take one turn in and one turn out,
Not very far from Dover,
Through every hour of the twenty-four
We hang about the Huns' back door —
Lord! what a life for a young sea rover!

We make no claim to beauty,
The big guns know us not;
We never dress for duty —
One suit is all we've got.
We oil ourselves, for speed's our rôle,
We'd race aught floating to the Pole
And back again to Dover!
Yet every hour of the twenty-four

THE DOVER PATROL

We bar the dismal Huns' back door —
Lord! what a life for a young sea rover!

We barter with the chances
That snatch our living breath,
For danger so entrances
We run full speed to death;
“The Lords of the Admiralty regret
That H.M.S. ——” — and then forget
The T.B.D. from Dover.
Yet every hour of the twenty-four
Somebody watches the Huns' back door —
Lord! what an end for a young sea rover!

DOVER STRAITS, December, 1916.

LINES ON A PORTRAIT
OF A MIDSHIPMAN KILLED IN ACTION

A BOY'S face wherein beauty lies
As in all things untouched by age,
A waking wonder in those eyes
That scarce had looked on Life's first page,
And all that beauty and that grace
For ever gone through Time and Space!

When last I saw those lips they laughed,
Those eyes were lit with sunshine then,
Who guessed a sudden, bitter draught
Would find in you a man 'mid men,
That strength could in such frailty lie,
And youth with such high courage die?

I do not ask why unto you
So brief a span of happy days
Was given — for there was much to do,
To see, to suffer, ere the praise

LINES ON A PORTRAIT

And pain of Life were yours, through years
Of love, and happiness, and tears.

I only know that we who move
Through heat of noon to shadowed hours
Covet your peace, and oft reprove
The chance that will not make it ours;
Not yours to know the failing strength,
The creeping of the shadow's length.

For ere the splendour of your noon,
Ere beauty had unfolded quite,
In eagerness you sought full soon
To part the curtain of our Night,
And now you know — perhaps, dear lad,
Your only pain that we are sad.

It may be heaven with your laughter
Rings, and is filled with youthful noise,
And we who wearily come after
Shall be amazed to hear a boy's
Glad greeting, and in your bright face
Find of that battle-rage no trace.

VIGIL

(For Francis Grierson)

WHEN daylight fades and darkness creeps
Over the wide and shuddering sea,
Wreathed in mist, like wandering ghosts,
The silent greyhounds guard the coast
While England sleeps.

What can the landsman know of the deeps,
And the long, lone watch in the tense, dark night;
Sleepless vigil of bloodshot eyes,
The firm, set jaw of the man who dies
While England sleeps?

The loud wind moans, and the dark storm leaps
Over the waste of the foam-flecked waves,
Thunder roars from the throats of steel,
In deathly throes the doomed ships reel,
While England sleeps.

VIGIL

When the white arm of the pale dawn swept
Over the rim of the barren sea,
No sign remained of the battle fought,
The heroes dead, the victory bought
While England slept.

A NAVAL NURSERY RHYME

SING a song of submarines, a U-boat full of
Huns,
A homeward-bound old trader with ever-ready
guns;
The chief was in the engine-room, the skipper at
the wheel —
A periscope, a smooth track, a shell of polished
steel.

Sing a song of submarines, the skipper swore an
oath;
It's "Hard to Port! Full Speed Ahead!" He
rams her, nothing loath;
The King was in the Council-room, the Queen
was with him too,
The skipper wears a medal and — there's food
for me and you.

MILFORD HAVEN, March, 1918.

THE AIRMEN

ZEUS, with the old gods all at play,
Has lost the realm he ruled so long,
For younger gods are born today
Whose new-fledged wings are swift and strong;
So Zeus, his kingdom overrun,
Has packed his thunderbolts away
And seeks a new place in the sun.

PRAYER FOR THE PILOT

LORD of Sea and Earth and Air,
Listen to the Pilot's prayer —
Send him wind that's steady and strong,
Grant that his engine sings the song
Of flawless tone, by which he knows
It shall not fail him where he goes;
Landing, gliding, in curve, half-roll —
Grant him, O Lord, a full control,
That he may learn in heights of Heaven
The rapture altitude has given,
That he shall know the joy they feel
Who ride Thy realms on Birds of Steel.

THE NEUTRAL ZONE

SAID Death: " This is an insult grave,
That men should fly as birds and dare
Transgress the boundaries I gave;
It shall not be! " Then through the air
Swept down, on vengeance sworn.

Said Life: " It is a neutral zone,
I bade them neither Yea nor Nay."
Cried Youth: " I claim it for my own! "
Death heard and watched, then turned away
Powerless 'neath such scorn.

LIFE

THEY do not live who only know
The dull procession of Life's flow,
They have no faith who never
Risk all, and in one hour of youth
Reach the subliminal self where Truth
Floods light and crowns endeavour.

They do not die who find in death
The great adventure, the first breath
Whence came this life from God:
Who, taking wings, laugh down at earth,
Leap skywards, and with boyish mirth
Run where the angels trod.

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916, WHILE
EUROPE WAS AT WAR

THROUGH all the afternoon the throbbing
car

Raced up the hills, and took the winding road,
Past villages and hamlets clustering round
The little churches standing in the peace
Of country solitude, until we gained
A valley where the river broadly flowed
Along a track of silver, wending through
Verdurous meadows where the browsing kine
Found pasturage and undisturbèd peace;
And there we paused, as though a spirit called,
With the small voice of solitude, for rest;
What sweet content breathed from the little vale!
It seemed the elemental strife which man
Can ne'er subdue, found there no sure abode;
And I, depressed, with thoughts too deep for
words,
Weighted with vague unrest, intangible,
As when one dreams and on the morrow finds

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

But shadowy conception of the things
Substantial in imagination — drew
Apart from those who walked with me, their
 hearts

Unshadowed with regret, their voices raised
In joyful accents, for I could not join
With their light-hearted gaiety, but felt
The burden of the time weigh down my soul,
Checking the generous flood of happiness.

Below me in the valley, towards the verge
Of the high hills, from whence the splendrous sun
Poured forth in golden flood, the village lay
With warm red roofs, with spirals of blue smoke
Taking their upward course among the trees
Where thrush and blackbird and the linnet vied
In rapturous welcome to the Spring; above,
Lost in the unclouded blue of this fair day,
A solitary lark sang out, as one
Enamoured with his voice, which hath no art
But only wild desire; upon the hill
A cottage window, like a burnished shield,
Caught up the radiant sun, and as the day
Slowly declined towards eventide, the light

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

Drew westward through vermilion bars, and
glowed,
And changed and waned until the shadowy veil
Of noiseless eve fell over plain and hill;
Around me in the hedgerows, where the buds
Gave promise of long days of leafiness,
The happy birds sang their last requiem,
And over all the countryside peace reigned.

But in the silence all my thoughts were turned
To where no eventide brought peace, no dark
Gave labour pause, but only deeper strife
And countless horrors moving in black hordes
With stalking Death, Discord and speechless
Fear.

O God who formed this world, with countless
gifts
Bestowed the changing hours, who filled the dawn
With matin song of birds, who blest the day
With labour in the open fields, the night
With soft refreshing slumber, and o'erhung
With countless stars the spaces of the sky
Whereby the consciousness of man should feel

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

The thrill and mystery when beauty wakes
Slowly to birth in Life's vast harmony —
Has Thou despaired, withdrawn Thyself from
this

Dark world where Chaos rules, and millions
wage

A war for some deep rights, some purpose held
Inviolatè from change? Dear God! in life
Is not the struggle fierce enough, the pangs
Of wild despair, vain hopes and shattered dreams,
Sufficient for the misery of man,
That all the earth in Honour's name should be
Saddened with human blood, and groan with
war —

All that dark butchery which, with banners brave,
And martial music, stalks the land and draws
The praise of the unhappy ones whose woe
Is gilded with the glory of great deeds;
For this hath Science won her victories,
And vanquished fell disease, outstamped the
plague

And placed within the hands of man the power
To rule the elements, girdle the globe,
Conquer the air, annihilate all space

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

And time — that Death might loom more ominous,
And Hell, with new inventive force disgorge
Fresh horrors beyond dreams' imagining?
Nay, 'tis a false corruption of the mind
Too avaricious grown, that holding dear
Power and wealth and territory stakes
A nation's happiness on one wild chance
Of ruthless acquisition for the few,
And basely doth appeal in Right's fair guise
To those who answer when their Country's name
Is challenged; thus in honour do they die,
Nor ask the cause — these heroes, poor, obscure
In Life's unnoticed walks where toil and want
Crush out the finer feelings, hold subdued
The spirit which at danger's call is quick
To move and fight for some faint privilege
Scarcely observed in time of peace, but now,
When danger threatens, high advanced in claim
Of act reciprocal; and all the world
Thus answers, doing that it loathes, yet held
In bondage of false service which betrays
The highest ends of life and liberty.
Thus nation wars with nation, and the earth
Groans with the carnage; desolation dwells

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

Naked throughout the land, and Want's chill
touch

Withers the children's happiness; the homes
Resound no longer with loved voices, Death
Stands by the thresholds where the broken hearts
Mourn o'er the relics of departed joy.

O my sad country! 'tis for thee I mourn,
Seeing this misery of war's victories!
The conquests which are but embannered lies
And bring no solace to the dead, to those
Who, more than dead, live on devoid of hope!
'Tis that I love thee well I make complaint
Against the evil of this time when man,
So far advanced towards visionary goals,
Falls back to barbarism, and excels
The spirit of the past in war alone;
And while the solemn light of evening broods
O'er this fair land where Spring hath come again
With its rich promise, and its youthful joy,
I think of those young hearts now stilled, those
boys
With glowing faces, glossy hair, and eyes
Undimmed with weariness of life, for whom
The springtime promise hath not been fulfilled;

THOUGHTS IN SPRING, 1916

For no glad Summer sees their glory; Time
Mated their Spring with Winter, and the years
Will wax and wane, the flowers bloom and die,
The birds will sing, depart, and the pale moon
Keep her nocturnal watches, but for them —
The cold and silent dead, these glories pass
And dust becomes a little dust.

And yet
Fondly their memory lives within our hearts
Ennobled, for they died and wrung from death
Admission of their triumph; untraded,
Their spirits with undomitable power
Soared to the heights whereon no mundane cause,
Or questionable purpose, could evoke
Thoughts of self-interest; and therein lies
The glory and the pathos of their doom.
Then as I mused the gathering night drew on,
Subduing all beneath its even flood;
Stars, and the rising moon, and the low sigh
Of the soft-breathing earth; and then a call
From my returning friends, on the soft wind,
And sadly towards them, through the gloom I
went.

MILLENNIUM

LORD GOD, whose hand rules over Time,
Whose love unshaken watches o'er
Thy nations spread from clime to clime,
From Arctic waste to southern shore:
Lord God, who rulest over all,
Hast Thou not heard Thy children call?

We are but children in Thy sight
Who cannot see but blindly grope
Towards the everlasting light
That burns beyond our earthly scope;
Lord God, with wisdom give us grace
To look more closely on Thy face.

The Earth's dominion man hath had —
Yet found in it desires that breed
A prouder race whose hearts are sad
With fruitless toil, insatiate greed;
Lord God, we weary of the years
That render us but blood and tears.

MILLENNIUM

The future that our fathers planned,
The dreams they knew in days of old,
Fulfilled, are ashes; heart and hand
Faithless, have served at altars cold;
Lord God, with wider knowledge give
The deeper grace by which we live.

A nobler purpose raise, O Lord,
Within our hearts than quest of wealth,
That we may build the realm where sword
May never vex the peace and health
Of those who keep the faith of old
Nor bring Thee, Lord, a heart grown cold.

OTHER POEMS



HELEN OF TROY

LAUGHINGLY with the wind in her hair
That brushed a gleaming breast laid bare,
She came from the hills like the stainless snow
Of Alpine summits which roseate grow
In the flush of dawn; and her eyes were bright
As the splendour of stars in a moonless night,
Her twin feet sandalled and silver shod;
Meet for the love of an amorous god
She moved with the grace of a poet's line
Winged with the lyre, the crystalline
Air of the morn about her flowing,
Laving the limbs superbly glowing,
The amorous arms, and secret breast
Lightly veiled from the lover lest
He grow too faint with the beauty of her
Who was white as a lily and sweet as myrrh.

She sang like a bird in an April dawn
When the trembling verge of light new-born
Gleams like gold on the grey world's edge;

HELEN OF TROY

And the lark, whose high-flown privilege
Was to sentinel day from his airy tower,
Fell silent beneath a sweeter power
Of song that descended like manna from heaven;
And the shepherd forgot the charge he was given,
The fisherman left his boat on the shore,
The trader ran from his little store
Where swords of silver, shields of gold,
Tyrian robes and girdles were sold;
And a youth sprang out of the shadowed sea
Where he bathed, his body like ivory
White and moulded, glistening yet
In youth's cold purity, naked and wet.
He ran to the shore like a child entranced,
Aureoled in the light that glanced
On the marble form, the length of limb,
Breadth of shoulder and grace of him
Whom men called Paris, Priam's son,
Whose beauty the heart of Helen won.

And the loved of men, the world's desire,
Spoiler of lands, and torch of fire
Lighting the frenzied hearts of kings,
Sang in the morn, and ran as with wings

HELEN OF TROY

To him whose embrace and body chill
Sent through her frame a breathless thrill;
And the shepherd watched, the fisherman stood
With passion that ran like fire in the blood,
And the trader cried in a voice grown old —
“ What is the worth of silver and gold
When the flesh is dry and the heart a stone? ”
Then the fisherman said — “ I dwell alone
On the homeless seas, and though nets are full
Life without love is not beautiful.”
But the shepherd turned to them both, and said —
“ I am young, and my father’s flocks are spread
O’er many meadows, and all men know
He cools his wine with Asian snow;
Love in the city streets I bought,
Yet the love I desire in vain is sought.”

She lay with his head on her tremulant breast,
Her mouth on his hair, her limbs caressed
By the ardent youth whose beautiful face
Lay in the soft warm resting-place;
But her heart was troubled, her soul knew
shame —

“ My life is consumed by a withering flame,

HELEN OF TROY

With beauty accursed of the gods — this boy
Lures me with love, to the doom of Troy."

While three made prayers to the adverse Fates
She cursed the gift that desolates.

THE MOON A LOVELY MAIDEN IS

THE moon a lovely maiden is
Who hides from me through all the day
Enwrapped in cloudy mysteries
That fall away
At sunset when she kneels to pray;
The moon a lovely maiden is.

The moon has sorrowful large eyes
And her round face is pale with fright;
What is the fear from which she flies
With face so white?
Her absence darkens the dark night;
The moon has sorrowful large eyes.

A maiden who has never smiled
The shy moon is, most beautiful,
Most virtuous and undefiled,
And dutiful —
Yet pleasanter to kiss a skull;
A maiden who has never smiled.

THE MOON A LOVELY MAIDEN IS

Perhaps the moon no maiden is
But one who goes with silent tread
And gives a cold and solemn kiss
To all the dead,
And sleeps a while within each bed;
Perhaps the moon no maiden is.

TO MARJORY: IN SPRINGTIME

LITTLE winsome Marjory,
Clasp my hand and come with me
Where the sunshine and the flowers
All rejoice in Springtime-hours;
Let us seek the meadow stream
Lit with many a golden gleam,
Where the ripples in the breeze,
And the slender willow trees,
Laugh and twinkle in the sun
Like a maiden full of fun.
Now the notched and silver palm
Heavenward lifts its Easter psalm,
And along the watercourse
Flames the yellow-blossomed gorse,
And the grass is soft and green
Like a carpet for a queen —
Little dancing Marjory,
Clasp my hand and come with me.

Gaily from the hawthorn bush
Comes the twitter of the thrush,

TO MARJORY: IN SPRINGTIME

Fast and faster yet he sings
As upon the bough he swings,
For he has so much to say
About the nest that's hid away
Where you'll never find it, love!
Now the lark has soared above,
Dropping from his throat the pearls
On a string that downward whirls
Like a thousand fairy bells
O'er the wooded hills and dells:
Up he soars and higher still —
Now his topmost note is shrill —
Ah! he sinks — his song grows less —
You wonder if it's dizziness?
Little frolic Marjory,
Shall we run to him and see?

Radiant is the joyous sun,
For, you see, he's just begun
Kissing all the little girls
On their golden tumbling curls,
And he smiles on little boys
When they are so full of joys,
Oh the sun — he likes the Spring,

TO MARJORY: IN SPRINGTIME

Likes it more than anything!
Now the bee is after honey,
Sharp as misers after money,
And he visits all the flowers
In the bright and sunny hours.
All day long the lilies look
At their faces in the brook,
And the daisies look around
Golden-eyed upon the ground;
Merry, elfin Marjory,
Clasp my hand and come with me.

All the scented hedgerows gay
Deck themselves in bridal may,
And the roses are in bud,
Each a tiny drop of blood;
And a thousand-fledgling-throats
Try to learn their woodland notes,
For how strange would seem the Spring
If no birds had learned to sing!
Let us go and in the grass
Lie and watch the clouds that pass,
Fairy ships all sailing through
Strange and boundless seas of blue.

TO MARJORY: IN SPRINGTIME

Let us go, it is such fun
Idly dreaming in the sun!
Laughing little Marjory,
Will you, will you come with me?

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

A YOUTH came down to the City, from over
the Hills of Sleep,

He came like the star of morning that fronts the
waking deep:

His cheeks were mantled with roses, his brow like
ivory gleamed,

And his eyes were dark and lustrous, the eyes of
one who dreamed.

He came to the gate of the City, and went thro'
the streets of men,

Singing the Song of Beauty they never will hear
again:

He moved in the crowded market where mer-
chants sought for gold,

Where Love was purchased with riches, and Hon-
our itself was sold.

Oh strange was the song of his singing, with pas-
sion the strains o'erflowed

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

Till his face was lit with glory, and his eyes were
fires that glowed;
The merchants, forgetting their bargains, went up
to the place where he sang,
And women, with children, came running at sound
of the notes that rang

Like the full, fierce torrents of Springtide, filled
with a mountain tone,
Eager for sunlit meadows after the cold, high
zone,
Now like the blended music of myriad, birdlike
notes
Flooding the stream-girt valleys, from out a thou-
sand throats.

Dreamily, dreamily, sweetly, now high, now low,
now soft,
The radiant youth was singing, and as he passed
they oft
Turned to the ground their faces, for in their eyes
the tears
Gathered and glistened, and falling, broke thro'
the seal of years.

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

The merchant heard in the singing the voice that
was his when, a boy,

He stood by the knees of his mother in the far-off
days of joy :

The children listened with wonder — a strange,
sweet story this,

Filled with a sorrowful yearning; whence came
this Youth whose bliss

Had stopped the hum of the market, had voiced
the grief of years,

And made them think of something — sad to the
point of tears? —

For a maiden ceased from kissing the lips of the
youth she loved,

And the children's eyes grew rounder, and never
a listener moved.

“ Come with me out to the sunshine, follow me
where I lead,

And leave behind in silence the woeful weight of
greed;

Men of the City, your labour is useless for ye
shall go,

Borne out on the breath of Winter, nor reap the
things ye sow.

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

“ Others shall follow after and reap your gift of
tears

With moans and heavy sorrow, bearing the weight
of years:

Come! for the things immortal are the things ye
need not seek —

The dreams endure for ever, the facts of men are
weak!

“ Who shall destroy the sunset, and who shall
silence the lark?

O ye who toil for sorrow, O ye who work in the
dark,

Scatter the gold of your minting and gather the
gold of the sky,

For the things unmade of men are the things men
cannot buy! ”

He sang, but some were scornful, the merchant
turned away —

A sunset was a sunset, a thing of everyday,
For dreams he had no leisure, and they had little
to give,

For he must toil for a living — though he never
had time to live.

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

The maiden turned to her lover who drank the
magic song,
She raised her lips to kiss him, and proved that
love was strong
To shatter the thought of the morrow with bliss
of the present hour;
And they left the dreamer singing and sought a
sheltered bower.

The mother called to her children; who knew what
evil spell
This song of peace and beauty placed on their
ears? — ah, well —
The beauty that never sickens, the rapture that
never dies
Is less than the lips of children with laughter and
piteous sighs.

“Come with me over the mountains” — he sang
to the dwindling throng —
“For men are sad with toiling, and many are worn
with wrong;
I go in quest of Beauty, in search of things that are
One with the noonday silence, one with the even-
ing star.

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

“ Follow me over the valley, there’s death in the
city-gloom,
Your backs are bowed with labour, your brows are
writ with doom,
Oh there is Death in your laughter, and Sorrow
within your eyes;
Come where the light shall fail not, and silence
makes ye wise! ”

The youth went on thro’ the City and down the
echoing street,
His brow bedecked with roses, and sandal-shod
his feet;
The maidens gazing after beheld his radiant face
Intense with the passion of Beauty, and lit with
holy grace.

On thro’ the gate of the City, he went towards the
height
That gathered about its summit the battlements of
night:
His song passed into the silence from whence it
came to men —
The passionate Song of Beauty they never will
hear again.

THE YOUTH OF BEAUTY

The gold of the earth they garner, the woes of toil
are theirs,

Famine, Oppression and Sorrow come with the
wearying years,

Dreams they are fain to purchase, for dreams and
rest they weep —

But the Youth of Beauty returns not from over
the Hills of Sleep.

A DEAD POET

(James Elroy Flecker)

WEAVE for his brow the laurel wreath, he
lies

For ever dumb, the lips that sang so well
Are locked in silence 'neath the alien skies,
And all the tales are told that he shall tell.

Ah, mourn a little, for his life was sweet,
And silence is too solemn after song,
He has gone hence ere men had time to greet
One who but seldom sang nor tarried long.

So sweet and light his singing, scarcely heard,
Only the silence touched our ears with sense
Of something void, as when a fluting bird
No more breaks on the valley's somnolence.

He has gone hence,— ah, whither! who shall say?
Perchance he treads the trackless paths of Night,
Long wearied in the Caravan of Day,
Perchance he seeks the Gardens of Delight,

A DEAD POET

And thro' dim-shaded valleys journeys on,
A moon-led pilgrim seeking for the Thing
Which dreamers spake of in the days long gone,
And poets sang of in a Grecian Spring.

It may be he has found those mounts of snow
All flushed with rose, those glades of endless sleep,
And knows the truths which many sought to
know,

And wonders now why men grow sick and weep,

Why some are sad, as he was sad in days
When Beauty was too beautiful and frail,
When a dear voice was sweet beyond all praise,
Rising at night-time from a starlit vale.

O nevermore for him the sunset fades,
Nor ocean lifts her waters to the moon,
No more his feet shall wander in the glades,
His soul with mystic rapture deep aswoon;

For him no caravans with sound of bells
Move from the Syrian cities shadow-dim,
Nor long-lashed maidens dream by palm-girt
wells,

Their phantom-world is all unknown to him.

A DEAD POET

He holds a wider converse with the stars,
And roams unfettered through the jewelled night,
His song flows in the wind 'mid nenuphars
Swaying and rustling in the dawning light.

Weave for his brow the laurel, for his name.
What brighter memory than those sweet songs
Sung in a too-brief life that knew not fame,
Yet gave this wealth which now to Time belongs!

ON VIVISECTION

GOD, the great artist, skilled in fashioning,
Made Earth, then furnished it with every-
thing

Of wordless beauty, flowers, and birds that sing,
Bees, butterflies and dogs, and things that ran,
And lastly, to crown all, created man,
Then cried — “ There is no other God who can
Out-dream the beauty of my lordly plan ! ”

Then God grew wearied with the things He saw
And shattered, with a mood, the perfect law,
Fashioned the tearing fang, the bloody claw,
The leprous things that leap and crawl and twist,
And thought — “ I am supreme in this, I wist,
No pang is undevised, no horror missed.”
But man brought forth the Vivisectionist.

ABSENCE

(To W. K.)

THE heart, more faithful than the brain,
In dear remembrance keeps the hours
And minutes — each a golden grain
We scattered, as the countless flowers

Fall to the scythe that ruthless ends
The glory of the hidden seed:
So Time the Reaper o'er us bends
And reaps our moments, while hearts bleed.

We knew this end, we smiled, and thought —
“ The day is far, no vain regret
Shall come between us now ” — we sought
To use the moments well, and yet

This hour now comes when I depart
And from the eyes and voice I knew
Find shelter for my lonely heart
Wherein, afar, to think of you.

ABSENCE

O friend, if somehow, on the wind
Your voice came to me, and I turned
To see your face, and found the kind
Calm light of eyes for which I yearned,

Then would this pleasure in my lot
Seem wholly good, and Time's decree
Less harsh — like dreams that I forgot
With morning light these days would be;

For here a thousand sounds and sights
Bring joy in wonder of new days,
A treasury of strange delights
Surrounds me in these brighter ways

Until the pain of troubled years
Falls from me like a pall of woe,
And as the moon its aura wears,
So now old sorrows round me flow

Taking a beauty from the light
Of this new rising into realms
Above those regions of the night
Where doubt the strongest overwhelms.

ABSENCE

Here, where the city by the sea
Holds converse with the reflux tide,
Come Noon and Night with majesty
To robe her like an orient bride.

The sunsets blaze beyond the towers,
As windows down a fane of prayer,
And ceaseless through the changing hours
Ships of all nations, seeking her,

Pour in her lap the spoils they bring
From lands of palm and burning noon;
They come in sunrise glimmering,
Or wraith-like sail beneath the moon.

With darkness, on the city's crest
The lights blaze like a diadem,
And there upon her heaving breast
Flashes and glides each lustrous gem,

Diamond and ruby, amethyst —
The jewelled river, trembling, lies
Rippled with light, in moonlight kissed;
While ferry-boats, like dragon flies,

ABSENCE

Hover from shore to distant shore
That, seaward, stretch into the night
Where the onrushing waters roar
Towards the long, linked chains of light

Mirrored in the lagoons that wait
Tidal re-union with the sea
When the lone sands, immaculate,
Re-conquered, set their currents free.

And oft the siren's wail is heard
Borne inland like the cry of pain
Of a lost soul, to darkness lured,
That has no hope of light again.

The sound of wind and moving seas,
The unknown, silent ships that pass,
Symbols are these of mysteries
Discerned but dimly in the glass

That mirrors life behind our sight,
Contracting to the eyes' domain
The reaches of a vaster night,
Unmeasured worlds that still remain.

ABSENCE

O friend, there is a time when speech
Is frozen with the breath of awe,
When all the little truths we preach
Seem fragments of a vaster law,

And in these days of lengthened view
How I have longed that you were here,
To walk with me, debate, construe,
And differ — as in days that were.

LIVERPOOL, 1916.

THE COURTESAN

CRUEL and fair and mutable as love,
Wide waters rise and call along their shores
To dreamers with the sunset in their eyes
Which ever seek the land beyond, the star
With light serene above the farthest wave;
And yet, O sea, so old and still so young,
Whose bosom rises with eternal breath,
Whose breasts shall wither not with age, nor lose
Their savour to the lips of men, thou art
A snare for the uneasy hearts that seek
A wilderness, trackless and wonderful.

And if such wonders lie upon thy breast,
If thy cold mouth entices, and ensnares
With bloodless kisses, and thy rapture holds
The fealty of men from age to age,
What purpose hath thy gift, for whom the wealth
And splendour hoarded from the light of day
In rayless caverns where green waters flow
And pass with noiseless motion? Are there eyes

THE COURTESAN

Thy witchery hath not charmed, or alien lips
That have not made surrender on thine own,
Or limbs that have not pressed thy sinuous
 grace —

A proud and noble lover who has laughed
With kingly scorn upon a courtesan?
For one day, it would seem, thou wilt disrobe,
Put off the shimmering mantle that enfolds
Thy cold, translucent body, and reveal
Thy fortune and thy splendour till the eyes
Of that proud lover will disdain no more
The heiress of the world's great treasury;
And locked in his embrace in peace at last
Thou wilt not moan upon the shore, nor sob
In the night wind, nor murmur in the sun
But sleep forever in an ageless peace.

BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

(For Joseph Conrad)

WHEN Admiral Blake sailed out to sea
His ships of the line were five,
And his flag was waving high and free
As he ploughed the crested main:
The cannon roared, the war-drums rolled,
For Devon lads were strong and bold,
And it was good to be alive,
Oh very good to be alive
And singe the beard of Spain!

The bosun's pipe called loud and clear,
The sails were bellying out,
And the Admiral sniffed the morning air
As they sailed on the starboard tack;
The headland faded dim and grey
In the mist of morn as they sailed away,
But they heard the distant shout,
The landsmen's farewell shout,
And a cheer went ringing back.

BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

Three days and nights they took the breeze
Till the land was out of sight;
Like birds of prey they roamed the seas
But the Spaniards all were shy,
Till the fifth day came, and with morning rose
Sixteen ships on the weather-bows —
“Spaniards? shall we fly or fight?
Spaniards? then we'll have to fight!”
And the Devon lads cried “Ay!”

They drew in line till the Spaniards loomed,
Towering sail on sail.
Cried Admiral Blake — “Those ships are
doomed,
So clear the deck for the fray!
Sixteen to five! — 'tis a hot day's work,
But I've not a lad that'll want to shirk,
So give 'em a cheery hail!”
They gave 'em a cheery hail
And the cannon roared away.

From morn to noon and noon to night
They hammered the Spaniards' sides,
But the pompous galleons took to flight
As darkness fell on them all;

BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

“ We'll follow them home,” cried Admiral Blake,

“ And send them a shot when it's time to wake !

They're very useful guides,

Oh, very useful guides,

And where they roost — we'll call ! ”

When daylight glimmered they saw the prey,

Fear gave them speed enough,

Flying for home that loomed up grey.

“ We'll follow on — keep in close,

That's their port ; more sail on the mast !

We've tracked the foe to his lair at last !

We'll tweak the Spaniards' nose,

We'll pull the Spaniards' nose

And by God ! we'll give it snuff ! ”

All through the morn they followed straight,

The Spaniards laughed to see

The simple English swallow the bait

And follow them into port ;

For in Santa Cruz the cannon lay

To left and right of the harbour bay —

Oh the Spaniards laughed in glee,

While the Admiral cried in glee —

“ Such a fight we have never yet fought ! ”

BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

Five small ships and a thousand men,
A hundred cannon or so,
Oh many would never see home again
But never a man knew fear!
And the cliffs loomed up to left and right
And they ran right into the heart of the fight,
And hailed the waiting foe,
The crafty, waiting foe,
With a rousing Devon cheer!

Then fire belched from the hills around,
The galleons ringed them in,
But Admiral Blake ran two aground
And felled the mast of the third;
Two more drew in and the cannon roared;
“Run her down, and get aboard!”
The Admiral cried above the din,
They heard his voice above the din
And they took him at his word!

All through the noon in the battle smoke
They waged a desperate fight,
Above and around the thunder broke,
Ship after ship withdrew;
For some were maimed and some were afire,

BALLAD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

And the rest had lost their keen desire,
 And they fought each other in fright,
 Destroyed each other in fright,
And the fear and panic grew!

And the British ship like a wolf at bay
 Snarled at the frightened foe;
Ten treasure ships at the bottom lay,
 Two of the rest were burnt;
Then Admiral Blake sailed out to sea
Battered and shattered, victorious, free!
 For the Spaniards let them go,
 They had to let them go!
For their lesson had been well learnt!

Admiral Blake sailed over the foam
 Wearied and wounded sore,
“Speed for England and get me home —
 Home to my native ground!”
And Plymouth watched for him; long the crowd
 Cheered when the ship lay off like a cloud,
 And the Admiral heard the roar,
 Smiled as he heard the roar,
Then died as he reached the Sound.

THE GREAT SHIPS

(For John Masefield)

I WONDER if the great ships
Are coming o'er the bar
With the West Wind in their rigging,
From unseen lands afar,
And if they slowly sail on
The rayless waters flowing
By the gates of a city I love well,
And where I would be going.

For I am as the great ships
And on the tide of life
Go forth to unknown places
And ne'er find rest but strife,
And in a human ocean
'Mid isles of brick and stone,
Past ports and lands I know not,
I sail through seas unknown.

I wonder if the great ships
Are crowding into port,

[190]

THE GREAT SHIPS

With mournful sirens wailing
As though from sea they brought
The terror of their conflict
Which holds them as they creep
From highways of the ocean
And wonders of the deep.

For I am as the great ships,
And sailing in a sea
Where chartless souls are moving
On human tides — to me
Comes thought of lands of twilight
And ports of rest where lie
The weary ships unchartered,
Beneath an evening sky.

I wonder if the great ships
Creep up at break of dawn,
The seagulls round their rigging,
Grey-winged, with cries forlorn;
Those ships and birds sail ever
Through dreams of mine that are
Of lone sands in the twilight
And the sunset o'er the bar.

LONDON, May, 1917.

[191]

THE HOUSE ON A HILL

A LITTLE house on a windy hill
And, beyond, a starry sky,
Sleeping fields in the moonlight chill
And the keen wind raging high;
But secure, within, a home of peace
Warm and locked from the night,
Music and generous talk and ease
In the soft, dim candle-light.

Fleeting hours not touched with fame,
Nor the splendour of dreams come true,
And yet how a little joy will shame
The triumphs the world can view!
Without, the wind rose high and shrill,
Within, secure, and warm,
In a little heaven high on a hill
What cared we for the storm?

For a golden voice with the 'cello rose,
Two hands touched ivory keys,

THE HOUSE ON A HILL

And our hearts were lulled to soft repose
With love-lorn melodies;
And the lonely wind like a spirit went
Wailing along the night,
Heard in the pause when the music, spent,
Died in a faint delight.

Ah! the laurels of years and the triumphs of
 . years
Shall fade, but the little things
Will all come back with a grace of tears
On soft, inaudible wings,
And the wind shall wail o'er a phantom hill,
The music come to an end,
And one will mourn the voice grown still,
The eyes of a vanished friend.

THE VALLEY

A ROAD winds through the valley in a land
I know afar,
And the hills rise up before it, robed in purple
haze,
It is a road through twilight that seeks the even-
ing star,
A road that I would journey as in remembered
days.

The hills shut out the sunset, and golden are their
brows,
And it is warm in the valley that slumbers at their
feet,
When through the misty meadows they drive the
lowing cows,
And the voices of the daytime die down the empty
street.

The silence, like a curtain, falls on the sleeping
hills,

THE VALLEY

Only the owl is wakeful, and the wind that wanders on;

And I can feel the silence, and my heart in exile fills

With yearning for the homeland, the days for ever gone.

A road winds through the valley, it shines beneath the moon,

The hills rise black before it, the stars are bright above;

Oh, I would die tomorrow to gain my heart's one boon —

This night to see in moonlight the valley that I love!

EXILE

(For Philip Gibbs)

LONG days, long days that never seem to end,
Why do you tarry so, is not my heart
Beating against the bars that will not bend
And let me fly to those dear friends afar?
For here the days grow changeless, and apart
From those I love, for whom my voice grows
 kind,
I walk in solitude grown eloquent.

There is a grove where every kindly star
Glow bright when shadows lengthen, and the
 days
Go westward, and the woodland pathways wind
To little dells that surely know my face,
For I was young with them and knew their joys,
How Spring dwelt in them, flushed with loveliness,
Till winter followed, and their beauty went.
Oh, are you lovely still for other boys
And do they dream as I did long ago,

[196]

EXILE

And strip and let the water's soft caress
Fall on their bodies, white and all agleam,
Then lie upon the grass and dream and dream
The mighty things which only youth can know?

Here by the seashore breaks the cruel sea
Loud in the midnight baring its white lip,
Here, while the darkness broods and covers me,
I am grown wise with that fine scholarship
Which absence fosters and the heart makes dear.
What lies beyond the darkness, on the face
Of those black waters restless 'neath the moon —
A wondrous daybreak, white and fresh and clear?
Is darkness always lost in light somewhere,
And Sorrow made to flee the morning's grace?
O Dawn, I cry to thee "Come soon — come
soon!"

There is a day that comes however long
The darkness broods upon the calling soul,
Which I shall know, and down familiar ways
Run laughing where a thousand whispers throng
And things are glad once more to see my face.
Oh, I will run from darkness, fill the whole
Glad morning with a noise of wildest laughter

EXILE

And clasp familiar hands in many a place
I never ceased to love, and look in eyes
That are not strange or cold; and there shall be
Great music at the heart of things, and after
Shall follow silence, cherished by the wise;
For I shall sit and call each memory
To show its faithfulness, and dream again
How I went forth from home and cherished
 friends
To learn in solitude and distant pain
How happy is the day when exile ends!

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

DOWN to Habberley Valley I went at break
of day,
The glory of the morning sun lit up the golden
way,
And all the hills and valleys, the paths and hidden
dells
Called with myriad voices, entranced with myriad
spells.

Ah, verdant valley dreaming in the light of this
old sun,
How many days have fled away, how much is left
undone
Since last I walked your mossy ways, and lay
among the heather
When Love and Youth together dreamed in
Summer's royal weather.

Something of the old rapture for evermore has
fled,

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

Some of the dreams have vanished, some of the
hopes are dead,
And the heart has lost a little of the simple joy of
life,
With the dearest visions shattered in the ever-
lasting strife.

*Days of old
Like the gold
Bright at morn on a mountain rim,
Now on the peak of a glaring noon
How I long for your valleys dim!
Shadows of Love and Youth and Laughter
Flee in the noon that follows after!*

Down to Habberley Valley I took the winding
way
Where the pine trees rustle softly and the silver
birches sway,
And as I trod the purple paths a thousand
thoughts upstarted
Tinged with regret for ancient days when life was
single-hearted.

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

Ah still the voices called me and the woodland
echoes rang,
From every wrinkled trunk and bole the elfin
voices sprang,
“ Oh thou hast been unfaithful — thou art come
to us again,
Let Mother Earth absolve thee with her tears of
silver rain!
“ Here in the happy valley, morning, noon and
night
The silence of the woodland shall bring thy soul
delight,
The dawn shall break in beauty where the hills in
splendour lie,
Oh come again, oh come again to the joys that
never die! ”

*Days of old
Like the gold
Bright at morn on a mountain rim,
Now in the weariness of day
How I long for your valleys dim!
Shadows of Youth and Love and Laughter
Flee in the noon that follows after!*

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

Down to Habberley Valley, as though a ghostly
hand
Had led me back across the years into the shadow-
land,
I trod in waking wonder, and my joy returned
anew,
For the heart was hushed with silence, and the
sweetness thrilled me through!
“ Oh come again to me and lay thy heart upon my
breast,
I am the great Earth-Mother, in my bosom there
is rest
For the weariest of mortals, when the world hath
left thee broken
I shall fold thee in my silence, in the calm of Love
unspoken!
In the silver of the dawn and in the gold when
twilight's falling,
In the hush of adoration there's a voice that's
calling, calling —
And a whisper seems to blow across the valley,
and the sound
As of fairies dancing lightly sweeps along the
dewey ground.”

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

*Days of old
Like the gold*

*Bright at morn on a mountain rim,
Now the ancient joy returns
As I tread in the valleys dim;
Shadows of Youth and Love and Laughter
Beckon me and I follow after!*

Down to Habberley Valley I went at break of
day
And wandered where the gorse in flame lights up
a golden way,
And where the stately pine trees shed their
needles, sweet and brown,
Laved in the lustral light of dawn in peace I laid
me down.

The branches waved above me, and the wind ran
through the grass,
I heard strange voices in the wood, steps that did
come and pass —
And the glad sun kissed my body, and warmly
smiled on me —
While heaven glowed in splendour — blue to in-
finity!

HABBERLEY VALLEY REVISITED

Oh here was rest and silence after the arid ways
That through the wide world's wilderness lead on
for endless days;
Splendour of sun and silence, beauty of valley and
glade,
Here peace stole in upon me beneath the pine
trees' shade.

*Days of old
Like the gold
Bright at morn on a mountain rim,
Once again my heart is young
As I dwell in the valleys dim;
What if Youth flies — Love and Laughter
These remain and follow after!*

A GARDEN AT RYDAL

NOW wanes the splendour of the mountain
rim,

The purple shadows in the hilly fold
Darken, and every lustrous peak grows dim,
The mists creep in the valley, white and cold,
The birds have chanted their last requiem
And westward all the hills are dark and bold.

Here in the garden not a leaf is stirred,
The happy laughter of the sunny moon
Is stilled, the busy noise of bee and bird
Comes not again, but Night brings her soft
boon —

For louder through the quiet now is heard
The streamlet silvered with the rising moon,
And like old thoughts of noonday happiness
The perfume of the roses floods the air,
And the night breezes with a light caress
Fall on my brow and wander through my hair;
Silence and Night, these influences bless
Our souls with rapt communion deep and rare.

A GARDEN AT RYDAL

Here in this garden dwell abiding things,
The everlasting beauty of the earth,
The lyric rapture of the bird that sings,
The magic of the dawn, the simple mirth
Of little insect lives, the peace that clings
To solitude, the wealth of common worth;

Abiding things that seem to mock at Fame,
That vanity which we too oft adore,
Forgetting how true greatness of a name
Lies in its worth to those, however poor,
Who tread the silent way, untouched with blame,
Serving great ends, illustriously obscure.

Now in the silence comes a space for thought,
A time to think, a quiet for the mind
To brood in, and great influences wrought
From the enduring moods of Nature find
Their healing mission in the mind that fought
For a dim end, despairingly and blind.

But here the fever of our life is cooled,
Passionless as the starlit night that fills
The sleeping valley, all my thoughts are schooled

A GARDEN AT RYDAL

To a great calmness by the sleeping hills;
Now is my life my own, nor overruled
By wild unrest that breeds a thousand ills;

For silence is the wise man's true domain,
And Nature the great book whose wisdom leads
Through tranquil days wherein choice spirits gain
The wealth of true content, and whoso reads
The language spoken by the wind and rain
Knows the one Truth behind the many creeds.

What profit to the soul if we with dreams
Would shape the world more to our heart's desire,
And following the transitory gleams
Lose native wealth and fall, in quest of higher?
Here in this garden 'mid the hill and streams
Silence has truths none other can inspire.

The bright star burning on the mountain crest
Seen in its steady splendour through the vale
Has no diviner purpose than the quest
Burning within my heart, and if I fail
Then better will arise until the best
Comes in that Dawn when all our stars grow pale.

A GARDEN AT RYDAL

The quest! — the consummation every one
Seeks for the dream he dreams, grows surer here,
For ardent spirits wearied with the sun
Grow tranquil in this peace that everywhere
Falls with the eventide; what we have done,
Or what remains, loses its weight of care.

The great hills sleeping in the lunar light,
The dark sky mirrored in the mere, the call
From the lone owl that fills the solemn night,
The cricket in the meadow, and the tall
Trees in the valley, stir with sound and sight
A newer sense that wakes amid them all,

That wakes, until the silence as with wings
Lifts me above the valley, and I know
A purpose vast with promise, love that sings
Under life's current, mighty thoughts that flow
Familiar as remembered music — things
That find their birth in silence, come and go.

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

PROSTRATE before the Sun's high, flaming
throne

The Earth lay molten in a thousand hues

That, like a rainbow's arch, diffuse

 Their lights of myriad tone

 Over a quivering zone

Fearfully reaching towards the setting Sun.

 High o'er the woodland, far beyond the hill,

 Lost in the purpled haze

 Mantling the sun-flushed ways,

 The cerulean wind-swept sky

Scattered her rosy flocks, and triumphing

Flung far their bannered beauty to the East

 Where lo! the rising Moon, so wan and chill,

 Ghostly and frail as one about to die,

 Wrapped round with mists of the dissolving
 earth,

 Rode on the flood of Night,

 Enrobed in lunar light,

Ere died the glories of the sun-god's feast

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

Or stilled to silence was his flaming mirth,
For he had died as daily he must die —
Gloriously, on his blood-encrimsoned bed,
Where he, soul-centred, smileth on their play,
And smiling, giveth Day.

Far on the westering course the pilgrim Sun
Journeyed along the flame-fed track of light,
Leaving to Earth the last bequest of Night:
And from a mist-wreathed blackthorn bush that
shed

Its sere, sad topmost leaf, the last lone one,
A blackbird, yellow-billed,
With husky voice outcalled,
And all the silence filled,
Then ceased and shivered, at the sound ap-
palled.

But in the leafless garden where the rose
Once reared her vaunted beauty to the
noon,
Holding within her fragrant folds the
tears
Shed through the silent watches of the
Moon

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

By one, who, dreamlike, walked in Love's
dire throes

And passion-fretted fears,

(Loosing her tresses in the scented
wind,

Mourning that hearts grow cold, and Love grows
blind)

Now, in the garden where the rose's
bloom

Lay in a wintry tomb,

Where no voice mourned the love for ever lost,
Sharing the rose's doom,—

A limpid voice its lucid notes uptossed,
Winsome and tremulous as a fairy thought

Builted on naught:

With music free, unthinking and unsought,

Upwelling from the fountain of the soul —

A boy's light laugh

Came bright as bubbled, mirth-provoking wine

That gods divine

Upon Olympus quaff;

But unto me, the voice of that glad boy

Brought echoing pain beneath the sound of joy,

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

For I, alas, a singer, see the whole,
The end that makes a shadow of all mirth
 Upon this changeful earth,
And I had wished to keep that merry voice
 Wherein my thoughts rejoice,
But Life, alas, moves onwards with the Sun,
 And day is never done
 Until the creeping night
Gathers the quivering limbs unto her breast,
 And stills the heart to rest
 With soothing sleep.

O happy voice of Youth, ring out! for now
 The springflood surges thro' the singing frame,
 And for the undimmed sight
The virgin Earth hath donned her bridal gown,
 Flower-flecked in green and brown;
 And thou mayst kiss her brow
With boyish adoration chaste and deep,
 Calling her many a name
 Sweet as her flower-strewn breast
That to her wearied children giveth eternal
 rest.
 Dream not of future years

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

For they are filled with tears,
But take the present good;
The passionless love, the endless dream, the flow-
ers of purity
Now in the garden of thy heart upspring,
Unheeding dim far-off Futurity
Whose wintry flood
Bears down 'twixt cheerless shores where no birds
sing,
Youth's blossoms, withering.

Within the garden, though the Winter drear
Has placed its palsied touch upon each leaf,
There is no fear,
There is no grief
While music such as thine
Startles the blackbird on the barren bough:
Oh Summer is not dead for evermore,
Though sounds no music in the frosty air,
As oft of yore,
When softest flutings to the Moon did vow
A heart's unchanging love for one so fair:
Oh list! the lucid laughter rings again
And from the bird all pain
Of wintry desolation fades away —

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

Surely a Springtime madrigal he heard,
Those were the flutes of Spring!
Echoing! Echoing!
Whereat the bird
Breaks through the silence of his own dismay,
And in the barren garden once more sings.

O Joy, whose magic wings
Soar up in music unto Hope and Love,
Within this boy's heart move
That he with tremulant music of his voice
May call this saddened garden to rejoice,
Teaching the sorrowing bird forgotten song,
For while this swift, spontaneous laughter runs
Like magic fire along our wintry veins
The sorrowful heart grows youthful, glad and
strong,
And all the wearying weight of life sustains!

O Desolation, powerless to break
The music of young life,
Thou spirit of Destruction, shall we mourn
While such light joy finds utterance, and is borne
Across the flowerless garden? Nay! I take

A BOY'S LAUGHTER

This music of a boyish heart of mine,
And through the echoing chambers of my soul
Its harmony divine

Memorably shall roll:

And if the burden of dead beauty weighs
Too heavily upon me in the days

When Summer's glory threatens to depart,
Then shall a boy's light laughter from a day

Long passed away,

Come back and whisper softly unto me;

Then I shall hear, and I shall understand,

Loving the garden's grief, as loves the land
The midnight moaning of the Moon-drawn sea.

TO PETER

PETER, when I hear you sing
And your merry laughter ring
Then I know to be alive
Is very good when you are five.
If you had the power to give
Something of that life you live —
Oh, so distant, now, from me —
I might laugh with you and be
Happy as the day is long,
Sing, like you, a merry song.

Peter, when I hear you speak
To your father, all I seek,
Like a bubble blown from soap,
Bursts and leaves me little hope,
For to him the words you say
Mean so much, and I, one day
Long ago, talked so to one
Who would now scarce know his son;
Yet perhaps some words I said

TO PETER

Are remembered by the dead.

Peter, when your father's hand
Clasps your own, I understand,
Though I have no little boy.
If you went away his joy
Would go too — he could not find
Another boy of just your kind;
And remember, Peter, you
Would ne'er find such a father, too!

TO RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

(Inscription on a Book of Verse)

AS a page unto his knight
Sings to give his lord delight
'Tis so I bring these songs to you,
Fain to fall beneath your sight
E'en though they tell of nothing new;

For, a poet, you will know,
Rarest roses often grow
Upon the tree mature with years,
And the sweetest songs that flow
Are those that tell of ancient tears.

Beauty is the smile of Truth:
You have plucked the rose of Youth,
Have strewn its petals one by one,
You have laughed and loved with ruth —
Yet beauty lives though youth is done;

TO RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

And from the immortal tree
Of Beauty that eternally
 Strews flowers in the path of Time,
I have plucked — O take from me,
 Love's laureate — this rose of rhyme.

TO A CLIMBER

HAVE you a doubt? — then settle it, and
say —

“ I have resolved henceforward from today — ”
Have you a fear? — crush it, or it will rise,
Face the whole world with courage in your eyes,
No man can win whose heart invites defeat.
Govern yourself — the whole world at your feet
Lies, quick to serve the man who knows his mind;
But in your strength be not too strong or blind
To the sure Fate that watches o’er the weak.
Fear not the voice of many — ever seek
Reason in calmness, for the greatest fall
Listening to counsel that was urged too well;
Keep to your word, and honour Friendship’s
claim —

There is no ruin like an inward shame.
Know in the hour that you decide to fight
There is no ally half so strong as Right,
And be not weak to battle with the strong
If, in your heart, you know their cause is wrong.

TO A CLIMBER

Honour your foe, and never learn to hate
Lest come a time that you will perpetrate
Acts that portray the fury of the fool.
Fear not to forgive; love, and be not too cool,
For only little minds have little passions;
Scorn not the failure — knowing how Life fash-
ions

Strength out of weakness which has found its end.
Live in the sun, laugh like a boy, and spend
Yourself for others — selfishness is crime
Against the law of life and Love sublime,
And lastly, in success be not too proud —
For all your glory ends but in a shroud.

TO NOBLE WOMEN

DEAR women, sweet and noble-hearted
Spirits sojourning on earth,
Where love and grief are never parted,
What bright influence gives you birth?

In that heaven made of dreams
Which the heart of man desires
Were you born of rainbow gleams
That God's smile on tears inspires?

For you span the darkest sorrow,
Build your nature from the storm
With the sunshine that you borrow,
Moulded to prophetic form.

Dear noble women whose compassion
Makes us children at your knees,
Is it from our griefs you fashion
Your bright faith which brings such ease?

TO A YOUNG POET

Who Deplored the Passing of Youth

YOU sighed and looked into the glass,
And seeing yourself — “ I soon will pass
With all my petty triumphs ” — you said —
“ I shall grow old, fall sick, be dead.”
And then you sighed again, and I,
Laughing unkindly, made reply —
“ Perhaps ’tis well you know it now
While not a furrow marks your brow,
While Youth’s red wine is sipped by you
And all is fresh and good and true;
Your face has yet its boyhood’s bloom,
Your laughter holds no hint of doom,
Your lithe young body, graceful, strong,
Is beautiful as a line of song;
Vigorous, clean, and quick, you find
Life is a joy but half defined,
And every act and every way
Brings a new glory to your day.
Some sorrow you have known, for which

TO A YOUNG POET

Your joy is something doubly rich,
And friendships' hours have proved to you
That flesh and blood are things more true,
More precious than the songs you sing,
For to your eyes they sometimes bring
A great and summer-smitten calm
That to the aching heart is balm.

“ And even yet light laughter lies
Slumbering in your magic eyes,
Eyes with a deep, soft, liquid light
Like the deep moonlit pools of night,
Though sometimes when your thought takes fire
Those eyes seem all a wild desire
Burning with bright intensity
Out of the soul's immensity.

“ Sunshine you catch within your smile
And hold its radiance for a while,
But fitful as an April day
You change, grow silent, draw away;
A poet, subtle as your songs,
A magic to your speech belongs
For you can play on human chords
With all the passion youth affords,

TO A YOUNG POET

Until your thoughts move quick and bright
As summer lightning in the night.

A flower,— a rose, a buttercup —
Your eyes will drink its beauty up;
A face, a song, that seems divine,
You mould it in a rhythmic line:
You burn with zeal to lock the rose
Within a tomb of fragrant prose,
A dream of beauty are the stars
Glimmering through the deodars;
At midnight on the wooded hill
Voices you hear, though all is still,
And in the ecstasy of Youth
You vow with Keats that Beauty's Truth.

“ And yet, young friend, the old are wise,
Regard a while the change that lies
Along the pathway of the years
That you must traverse — sighs and tears,
The end of youth's fine healthy glow,
The zeal with which you overflow.
Gone is the glory of your face,
With it your body's fawn-like grace,
Ah, more — the thread of lively thought
That held your friends and made you sought

TO A YOUNG POET

And led you to a throne of glory,
Breaks now your head is aged and hoary;
Your listeners all are crept away,
Many to sleep, a few to pray —
Silent the audience chamber now
Where sits Old Age with wrinkled brow.

“ Young friend,” I said, “ fear not the glass,
For never joys will come to pass
When all the witty things are said
And fever in the blood is dead;
A perfect calm, the heart at ease
Wearied no more with need to please,
The genial gentleness that sheds
A benign grace on silvery heads,
The ripened thought, the sweetened soul
That has all life in its control,
That lauds the aim, and not the end,
Knowing how failure may befriend,
The eyes that see the border line,
The hand that feels a grasp divine,
The twilight calm, and the last sleep
That like a tide runs to the deep —
Young friend,” I said, “ all’s well! these things
Are Life’s best gifts which old age brings.”

THE PORTRAIT

THERE is a gift, friend, in your hand; here's
proof

That just so many eyes that gaze will see,
Though never one finds what the other finds
Or reads into the face portrayed the same
Interpretation; Daniel's mystic wall
Had troubled less these readers of the soul
Who mount your stairs, tap on your studio door
And taking chair, are seated leg o'er leg,
Lean back, and with the zest of ignorance
Pronounce the verdict, praise you, Raphael-like,
Or, with a deference masking self-conceit,
Drawl out their smug suggestions — "on the
cheek

Is not the shadow — well — perhaps not; — but
Yet 'tis a layman's fancy! — still . . . per-
haps . . ."

And so they leave you striving with faint doubts
When all had seemed so clear and true; and now
You hesitate, when, "Rap!" — the studio door

THE PORTRAIT

Opens to show your second visitor
Who, greeting given, straightway takes his stand
Fronting the easel, silent; on the roof
The rain falls musically where the glass
Is washed of grime from office chimney-pots
Guarding your seven-story studio,
And now the second verdict. "Yes . . . the
face
Is perfect, wonderfully true — but is
The brow so broad — yes? Somehow . . .
well of course,
The artist, *he* should know indeed" — then goes
The second critic down the stairs, and you
Begin to doubt your gift when — "Rap!" — the
third!
Oh! but you are a man of Christian spirit!
Suffering the fool so gladly that he thinks
His thin, diluted wisdom warms your soul
And helps you to that effort which shall raise
Your name and fee beyond provincial cavil;
And the third critic, smoking your cigarette,
Makes judgment with the spice of wit, dilates
Upon the happy touches, those sure tricks
Which make the portrait lifelike, and you smile

THE PORTRAIT

To hear your genius classed with conjuring —
Dexterity of hand combined, with eye.
Then down goes critic three, while you remain
To clean your brushes, thinking all the time
That Art is but a jade — to flirt with, yes.
But marry — if you dare!

Meanwhile, I pray,
Allow me audience — the portrait's source,
The flesh and blood,— of me what thought your
critics?

Am I not wronged, or is the Samson-sight
Too blind to note the Philistine in me!
Take critic one, and learn his view; he comes,
For all his twelve stone, blithely up the steps,
Flushed with good health, a man of easy life
Who finds his natural appetites appeased
As soon as thought gives action to desire.
He laughs, is never melancholy, lives
As though the world were ordered to his taste,
With flat in town, a maisonnette in Paris,
Bungalow on the river, and a place
Girt with ancestral towers, 'mid a park
Noisy with rooks; and so he lives his life,
Through days of free disposal. Labour, want,

THE PORTRAIT

Disease, despair,— such things exist, he knows,
But are as discord in a distant room,
Walled up, too far removed to be disturbing;
And as his life, so his philosophy,
And as this latter, so his view-point too
When judging this our portrait; hear his words —

“ An interesting-looking face, some day
Bring him to tea, but why so sad, no youth
Should look so miserable, though these poets
Find pleasure in their pain. They say his books,
Which I have never read, show deepest thought —
Somehow I never could read poetry
Or I would borrow them and read myself —
Surely he looks more cheerful in real life
Or is it just a trick you artists have
To hint at sorrow in the eyes, to lend
A wistful spirit to the face? I heard
My cousin speak of him the other day,
He swore he never met so gay a wit,
Such sparkling high vivacity before,
And he has travelled much, knows Paris well,
Which is the home of talkers, but this boy
Impressed him, evidently poor, he thought
Had travelled little, longed for Italy —

THE PORTRAIT

Singular that, you know, I lived there once
For quite three years — a hot and weary place
Where galleries innumerable hold
Insipid faces by 'Fra this,' 'Fra that' . . .
A glorified museum with broken limbs,
Chipped torsos, Venuses galore, Madonnas
Gathered by thousands in long galleries.
It is a strange face this, in many ways —
Look at the mouth, somewhat effeminate
With its twin-cupid bows, and those slight curves
Turned inward at the corners, not the face
Of one who battles much, a dreamer's rather
Who feels resentment 'gainst a world whose rules
Enforce the need of conflict — those strange eyes
Can blaze at times, I think, and sulk as well,
Not quite a pleasant character, all told —
Disposed to rage against the powers that be,
Too much inclined to point the fault, to brood,
Contemning life not ordered to his taste;
The hair shows that, its very manner speaks
Defiance in the face of common facts —
He struggled bitterly, you say? One sees
The traces in the mouth, a cynic sneer
Lurks there for the unfortunate who dares

THE PORTRAIT

Appraise too glibly, speculate on life
With cheerful faith, and bank-book optimism;
And what conceit! — a thing I much admire
If not too much in evidence. You smile,
I see, and think I do him wrong, indeed
It may be so, I do not know the man
But if the fairy godmothers at birth
Were parsimonious, they gave me this —
The gift to read a face! ”

So critic one
Judges the portrait, and the portrait's source,
Then starts to find how time has flown, jumps up
And hurries to a club lunch where the Major
Waits friendly help to damn the Government.
Well, and the portrait judged, what satisfaction
Have you or I, for some one lies — your hand,
My face, or critic one — God knows in truth
I am no person such as he discerned,
And so — the critic lies, if not — the portrait,
Who shall appoint the blame? Why! critic two!
Listen, he climbs the stone steps, not a man
Inclined to hurried action, regular feet
Are these, bespeaking calm, deliberation;
The frosted panels of your studio door

THE PORTRAIT

Reflect his shadowy silhouette a space
Before the knuckle whitens on the glass.
He greets you with an air not grown perfunctory,
And takes the chair you offer, then unwinds
The muffler at his throat, unbuttons, spreads
His hands revealing thin white fingers, frail
As any nun's held up in act of prayer.
We like this man, as much as one can like
The acquiescent temperament and face
That smiles on good and evil, nay, denies
Such thing miscalled, for "error" is its name
Smilingly he will tell you, with a grace
Which only childlike innocence could maintain.
His bearing, like a tree in summer state
Soft-singing to the tender breeze which plays
Amid the leaves whispering in alarm,
Is deferential yet withal is strong;
Oppose him, he will smile, give way so far
And with a fine resilience swing back,
As the tall elm that from the raging storm
Released, asserts its former majesty.
He will not understand your tale of woe,—
All outward things are ruled by inner thought,
Control that force the world is yours to shape,

THE PORTRAIT

He tells you; all the while stark poverty,
Ugliness, disease and crime confront him
And yet he cannot, or he will not see them,
For seeing would corrupt the thought; and so
The portrait finds no critic of its flaws,
But one whose task is to assess, reveal,
Dilate upon its qualities, and make
Careful deductions full of kindly thought;
But first there will be silence — then —

“ Well done! —

This is most delicate, as soft as bloom
Blurring the peach, and those deep lustrous eyes
Are lucid as the dew on pansy petals —
Light backed with velvet darkness; what a touch,
A happy touch that shadow on the temple;
This face seems all alive with thought, and sweet
Ingenuous emotion — not of one
Who ever let a base desire corrupt
The soul, but pure, of infant innocence,
Reflected in his poems. Have you read
Those tender little lyrics that he wrote
In — what's the title of the last book out? —
Well, here's the source of all their wistfulness,
Their grace and soft tranquillity, akin

THE PORTRAIT

With moonlight and a wide and starry sky.
Though I have heard things, this face looks on joy
More often than on sorrow, what you say
I know is true — these ills of life distract
A mind so sensitive, but what are they
To one with soul so dominant; the head
Reveals the thinker throned above the jars
And frets of life, walled in by petty cares.
You triumph in this portrait, having found
The spirit underneath the flesh, the part
Most perdurable, for the whole thing shows
The living soul beneath the outward guise.
This is no worlding-face, no passion here
But peace unbounded like an arctic plain
Of wide, immortal and untrodden snows.
You have been faithful — and the mortal man
Marked with the storm you have not shown, in-
deed
This is no portrait in a sense which deems
Resemblance to its subject the first rule,
Many will see no verisimilitude,
But what of that? — ‘ the Soul,’ Art cries, ‘ show
that!’
And you have shown it!”

THE PORTRAIT

Thus spake critic two
And when he went, with gentle smile, and firm
Warm pressure of your hand, what thought you
then?

Strangely confused you were, I think, for how
Could the artistic temperament derive
Pleasure from praise that so neglected art?
“No verisimilitude!” he said, the words
Are censure in one form, the eye and hand
Have failed in their first office to portray
The subject of the portrait; life-like? “No!”
Our friend says, and you chafe, the compliment
Was doubtful. Ah, my friend, you must resolve
What is the true criterion of Art,—
To show the living man, that all cry out
At first glance, “’Tis the poet, you remember,
He lectured last month at the Assembly rooms!”
Or prove the connoisseur — philosopher —
Reveal the soul, the animating spirit,
Neglecting the resemblances of flesh?
Perhaps the best way beyond all contention
Is that combining truth with introspection —
Give likeness both to life and soul at once?
Which, think I, you have done, friend. Do not
doubt

THE PORTRAIT

The artist knows his own creation best,
As any mother at a glance detects
Her own child at a crèche where strangers' eyes
See infants all alike, all featureless!
We live in fear of misconception, friend,
And yet all great work must precede the age
Capable of its recognition; take
Galileo for instance, when he dared,
Infidel preposterous, to assert
The Earth moved round the Sun, confounding
God,
And all the prophets — then a war of theories,
Ptolemaic 'gainst the Copernican,
Pope, Church and Inquisition, bulls, decrees
And recantation under torture; truth
Has always suffered crucifixion, friend!
But we progress, withal, none now to laugh
Poor blind Galileo to scorn! ah, you,
We, artists all, walk lonely in our way.

The critics one and two gave little help,
Both saw the portrait, each misjudged in part
Model no less than artist; now, once more,
Hear critic three, a lady this who calls,
A person of *bon ton* — and titled too!

THE PORTRAIT

Who has not seen and worshipped Lady Jane? —
Since that first day Sir Roland brought her home
To famishing estate and crumbling grange,
The relics of a past magnificence;
She came, and in a throng of parvenus,
Brewers and druggists, merchants one remove
From small shop vendors — no disgrace appends
To low beginnings, rather credit, save
The ladder is not scorned and kicked away
And knighthood purchased as a gilt for dross —
'Mid such a throng she moves, outdazzled quite,
Like a small diamond in a world of paste,
But known and valued truly all the same.
Yet diamonds have their flaws, and she, in truth,
No less reveals defects of quality.
These charity parades, these matinées —
My lady in her box is billed no less
Than famous actress — patron one, the other
Performer, yet both seek the public gaze,
Both qualified by merit to appeal,
The one by gifts, the other by her birth.
Is it not strange, friend, how Duke this, Lord that
Are personages just because a crowd
Will flock to stare at them; suppose my Lord,

THE PORTRAIT

Billed as a patron, takes his box and sits
In public view — and no one comes to view,
Who is my lord then? — sad to think, a mere
Useful or useless man, no more, no less —
The patent of nobility's the crowd!

My Lady Jane knows this, reveals herself,
Speaks, patronises just enough to whet
The common curiosity, no more —
Then holds aloof, position thus acknowledged.
I am not kind to speak her faults, but there,
So much we all know, and that known, the rest
Is testimony to her tender heart,
Sweet face and eyes, and ears for pity's call.
Now let her judge the portrait. Pause awhile,
Those seven-storey stairs take all the breath.
“ So you have finished it! I like the pose,
There is a regal calm about that brow,
Sloping to shadow, and the eyes are good,
But do you know, I think there is a want
Of wistfulness? — those eyes are laughing now,
They may be true to life. From all I hear
This poet shares the madness of his race
Which half excuses his wild escapades —
You did not know . . .? — you modern Stylites,

THE PORTRAIT

Brick-pillared in the clouds, seven-storey high,
Art checks all converse with your fellow-men! —
Forgive me, I should not have mentioned this,
Maybe ill-natured gossip takes his name
As a distaff to wrap its scandal round,
But those eyes look the part, I must admit.
This portrait fascinates me, first, because
It is a work of art, and secondly
One now can study every line and read
The truth of this strange face. I saw him once
At an At Home — he read a poem there,
And as he syllabled the words, it seemed
As if a music fell upon our ears,
Not speech, nor sound alone, nor wholly sense
But joy and sorrow, peace and pain, all these —
A spirit that made silence eloquent
With dim rich memories, and gave to words
A music that with healing sought our ears,
Entered our hearts, and ran through all the veins.
We sat entranced and wondered at ourselves,
Tried to resolve identity, to find
What all this life meant — for a space, and then
This necromancer broke his spell of words,
Laughed at us for our folly, and withdrew,

THE PORTRAIT

Tea-cup in hand, to enjoy our adoration.
He has no modesty, he rates himself
Among the gods of song, and takes his place
With cool assurance 'mid the greatest names,
And yet, strange paradox, if you speak praise
With genuine feeling, he will smile at you
As though he thought you mocked him. You
have caught

Some of this insolence in the whole pose —
The chin advanced defiant, and the mouth
Too delicate, I think, compressed to show
Half-veiled contempt for people of this world.
It is a true and charming piece of work,
You have revealed the man behind the pose."

Judgment delivered, Lady Jane has gone,
Now are you satisfied? No? nor am I!
Oh artist friend of mine, we well deserve
The punishment incomprehension brings
For asking judgment of a world so blind.
Three critics, and three verdicts! Ask no fourth,
For truth is not in numbers; who would think
So many portraits, each one different,
Three pairs of eyes could conjure from one
frame;

THE PORTRAIT

And yet the portrait does not lie, no fault
Is yours, my friend; the work is true and good —
Remember that the model suffers too!
What am I, dreamer, hypochondriac,
True-souled revealer of the heavenly things
By virtue of a childish innocence,
Gay mocker, with a cynic-sneer, or what —
Posturing fool that apes the mighty man?
Three critics saw three portraits, but their words
Spoke of a dozen men, and never me!

Here is excuse to diagnose myself
And play the egotist that Lady Jane
Avers I am — but for a while I stand
Behind the portrait, let it speak for me;
What does it say for its original?
Has Art revealed in subtle shade and line
The underplay of nerves, emotion, thought
Which makes expression, and presents the face
Stamped o'er with vice or virtue for the world
To read at sight? Ah, friend, your task is hard,
For words, light-spoken words, die with the breath
That brought them forth, but all your work re-
mains

THE PORTRAIT

A witness how you spoke — this line, this shade
Will tell their story, and the judgment holds
If your hand gossiped while it drew, allowed
The scandal in its curve to damn the face;
The lie remains, for whoso sees will read
Not truth, but your translation from the flesh.
Your task is hard, indeed; three critics saw
A portrait, which is mine; the fourth, the artist,
Drew it,— you are a critic just as they,
Drawing to judgment of the eye; and now
Speaks critic five — the true original.
And I am most perplexed. Four critics saw
Four characters within one face — the fifth
Is no less sure to fail, let me confess;
Much wisdom came from Greece — one proverb
said,
“Man, know thyself!” — the comprehensive
sage
Found Truth's dilemma when he uttered that,
For what we are none knows, nor ever will —
Birth, Death, Soul, Mind, Thought — embryonic
words,
Metaphors of a truth beyond our ken:
Wherefore, how often must we fail in sight

THE PORTRAIT

Both to perceive and to record the truth
Through mists of prejudice, and colourings
Of temperament; each setting of the sun
Records its daily self not twice alike.
Here, then, the secret of our portrait, friend,
You saw and made it as you saw, your truth
May differ in the eyes of critic one
As his in those of critic two and three,
And yet you have not failed but triumphed — this
I know and feel, now, as with face to face
I read my features through your eyes, attain
The broader view from vantage ground of yours;
Thus you fulfil your office, with your hand
Make mirrors for mankind to see itself.

THE END



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